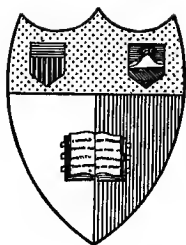


THE MAGIC CASEMENT





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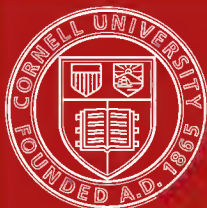
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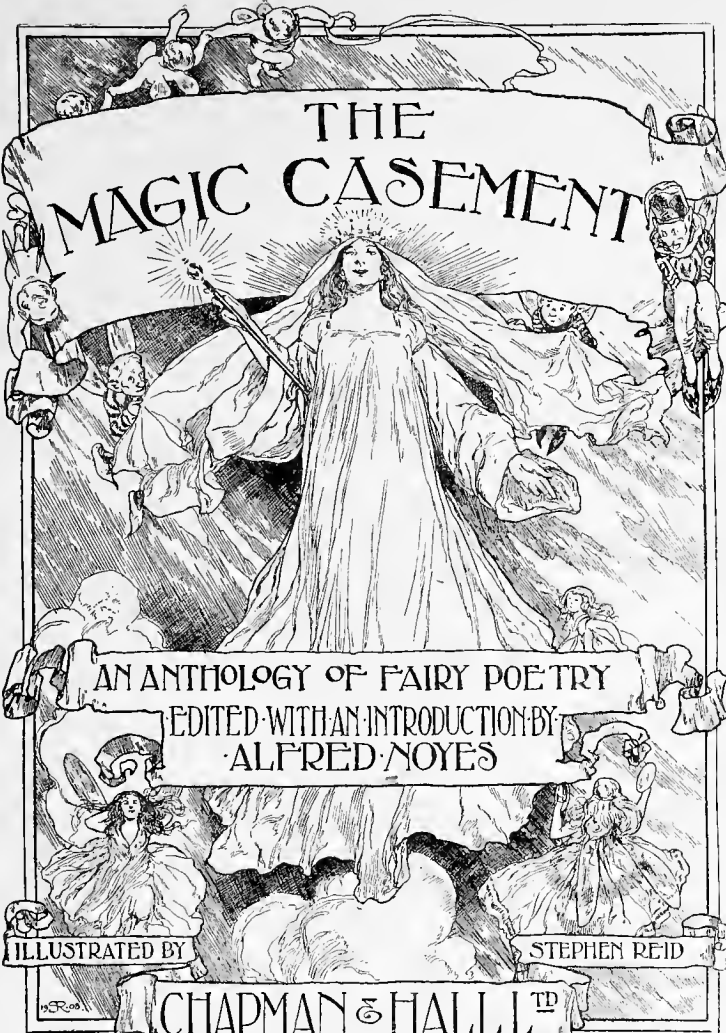
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A Midsummer's Night: The Quarrel



THE MAGIC CASEMENT

AN ANTHOLOGY OF FAIRY POETRY

EDITED WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY
ALFRED NOYES

ILLUSTRATED BY

STEPHEN REID

1908

CHAPMAN & HALL LTD

NOTE

MY thanks are due to the authors and publishers whose kindness has permitted the use of copyright poems in this book: to Mr. Swinburne, Mr. Watts-Dunton, Mr. G. K. Chesterton (and Messrs. Dent), Mr. Rudyard Kipling, Mr. R. C. Lehmann (and the proprietors of *Punch*), Sir Theodore Martin (and Messrs. William Blackwood and Sons), Mrs. William Sharp (for extracts from the poems of "Fiona Macleod"), Mr. W. B. Yeats, and Dr. John Todhunter.

ALFRED NOYES

"AND IF THAT THE BOWLE OF CURDS AND
CREAME WERE NOT DULY SET -OUT FOR
ROBIN GOOD-FELLOW, WHY, THEN, 'WARE
OF BULL-BEGGARS, SPIRITS," ETC.

"FROM GHOULIES AND GHOOSTIES, LONG-
LEGGETY BEASTIES, AND THINGS THAT GO
BUMP IN THE NIGHT,

GOOD LORD, DELIVER US !"

Quaint Old Litany



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INTRODUCTION.

THE "Magic Casement," through which the reader of this volume is invited to look, is, of course, that same casement which was enchanted by the nightingale of Keats. The foam of perilous seas has been blown against it ; and many a princess has leaned down from it at dead midnight to be kissed by some knight that has come adventuring "through forests towards her face." The Midsummer fairies of Shakespeare hold their revels in the woods that whisper round it—those peculiarly English woods which he had the audacity to describe as "near Athens"—and it has even been rumoured that a nine-fifteen express has been driven thundering through the haunted valleys below it, by a romantic engine-driver taking tired week-enders to paddle on the yellow sands of those faery lands forlorn. Most poets affirm that if we only kept our own eyes open we should discover that the true fairy-land is really our own world, or a part of it. As many views, under as many atmospheric conditions as possible, are offered to the reader in this book, which, it is hoped, may be found worthily and completely representative of the Fairyland of English Poetry. In an age that is gradually coming to regard the hailstone as a messenger from God, and the grass-blade as bearing the universe on its point, such an anthology

would hardly be complete if it did not admit of the view that even fairies may be "nurslings of immortality." Here and there accordingly in some of the following poems we may detect something like a definite "criticism of life" as in Mr. Chesterton's "Modern Elfland," which is an attempt to draw magic from its natural source, the real world around us, and to shatter our materialism at one blow. Or again (as in "The Elf-King's Victory," by Mr. R. C. Lehmann), we have a pungent, but delightful, satire upon such futilities as modern warfare. Or again, we have the archetype of the fairy-tale, as in Tennyson's "Day-dream," the fairy-tale of all fairy-tales *in excelsis*, and at the same time the love-story of all true lovers in the world.

Some exquisite work by some well-nigh forgotten poets like George Darley has been included, and the test for inclusion (over and above the requirement that they shall give us a glimpse of the faery world beyond the casement) in all cases has been simply the test for poetry, the question whether, in the editor's fallible judgment, the verses helped to beget again that golden time when the earth appeared "an insubstantial faery place" and a fit home for song.

A somewhat broad use perhaps it is that we make of the phrase "faery world;" for glimpses

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are certainly given in this book of something more than the world of Cobweb, Moth and Mustard-seed, something darker than the exquisite world of Thistle-down and Pease-blossom, Moon-blue and Star-mist, something more dreadful even than the world of Dragon's-blood and Bat's-tongue : glimpses in fact of those terrible and cruel things which are perhaps the necessary shadows of the picture ; for did not Shakespeare himself speak of the fairies that do run *by the triple Hecate's team* :

“ From the presence of the sun,
Following darkness like a dream ” ?

And that last line, by the way, is perhaps the most beautiful in all fairy literature. We have then suggestions of the Witches, in the dark shadows, with their cauldrons and incantations ; and out in the perilous seas beyond their blasted heaths we may occasionally get a glimpse of some glittering mermaid tossing her white arms to the moon. Yet this many-coloured and variously enchanted world has a certain unity, and we have tried to preserve the sense of this by including no poem that is not in some way linked to its neighbours. One or two pieces like Hood's "Fairy-tale" and Scott's "Owlspegle" (or as it has been entitled here—"The Haunted Chamber") were added for the humorous relief they afford to a book which—if

arranged on too strict lines—might easily incur the charge of monotony. Yet they occupy niches which certainly ought in any case to be filled, standing, as they do, in the same comic relation to their more serious brethren as the Windsor Forest fairies, the belabourers of Falstaff, bear to the more ethereal fays of the *Midsummer Night's Dream*. Of that little known serious poem by Hood, entitled "The Two Swans," we may perhaps say here that we are strongly tempted to place it almost on a level with his "Plea of the *Midsummer Fairies*" (full of remarkable beauty as that longer poem is). "The Two Swans" has the rich obscurity of the very place it describes, a midnight lake thickly shadowed by trees and overgrown by great floating water-lily leaves. There are few poems which so vividly give one the impression that their author has really looked upon a fairy with his living eyes as does this one when—as a wild swan sings somewhere in the midst of that tangled gloom—a little casement opens,

And forth into the light, small and remote,
A creature, like the fair son of a king,
Draws to the lattice in his jewelled coat
Against the silver moonlight glistening,
And leans upon his white hand listening.

There is not a conventional touch in the whole poem. It is the work of a man who is groping

towards the evolution of the fairy creation out of his own independent mind.

Do we believe in fairies? For ourselves we sincerely do. They may be relegated to the "Never-never Land," or to some wild weird clime, "that lieth sublime, out of space, out of time;" but after all that is just where Shakespeare's peculiarly English wood "near Athens" must lie, and we are content to believe that it is there they exist. For the reasons of our belief we must refer the reader to the cloud of witness in this book,—a cloud in two senses perhaps, yet a cloud with a glory in it. Fairies, no more than angels, can escape the "higher criticism" of the present age; yet, just as there are passages in the Bible which bear the stamp of eternal truth upon them, which we feel in some way to be corresponding with something at the very heart of the universe, so also in some of the poetry of Fairyland we are made to feel that if we knew all the suburbs of Heaven, and all its parks and provinces, somewhere or other we should be brought face to face with those "nurslings of immortality" which are so beloved by the little children and the child-spirit in man.

Of the ancestry of fairies up to the time of Shakespeare we cannot do better than quote from the Old Testament of Spenser :

It was a great
And ample volume, that doth far exceed
My leisure to repeat :
It told how first Prometheus did create
A man, of many parts from beasts derived,
And then stole fire from heaven to animate
His work, for which he was by Jove deprived
Of life himself, and heart-strings of an eagle rived.

That man so made he callèd Elf, to weet
“Quick,” the first author of all Elfin kind ;
Who, wandering through the world with weary feet,
Did in the gardens of Adonis find
A goodly creature, whom he deem’d in mind
To be no earthly wight, but either spright
Or angel, the author of all woman kind ;
Therefore a Fay he her according hight,
Of whom all Faeries spring, and fetch their lineage right.

Of these a mighty people shortly grew,
And puissant kings which all the world warrayed
And to themselves all nations did subdue :
The first and eldest, which that sceptre swayed
Was Elfin ; him all India obeyed,
And all that now America men call :
Next him, was noble Elfinan, who laid
Cleopolis’ foundation first of all :
But Elfe-like enclosed it with a golden wall.

His son was Elfinell, who overcame
The wicked Gobbelines in bloody field :
But Elfant was of most renownèd fame
Who all of crystal did Panthea build :
Then Elfar who two brethren giants killed,
One of which had two heads, the other three :
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Then Elfinor, who was in magic skilled ;
He built by art upon the glassy sea,
A bridge of brass, whose sound heaven's thunder seemed to be.

He left three sons, the which in order reigned,
And all their offspring in their due descents ;
Even seven hundred princes, which maintained
With mighty deeds their sundry governments ;
That were too long their infinite contents
Here to record. . . .

After all these Elficles did reign,
The wise Elficles in great majesty,
Who mightily that sceptre did sustain
And with rich spoils and famous victory
Did high advance the crown of Faëry :
He left two sons, of which fair Elferon
The eldest brother did untimely die ;
Whose empty place the mighty Oberon
Doubly supplied, in spousal and dominion.

Spenser carries his genealogy a little further and finds a descendant for Oberon in Gloriana herself. We prefer to treat that as apocryphal and begin our anthology, from the point where our quotation ends, with less courtly guides. The fact, however, that Spenser is able to extend the borders of fairyland so far as to include the first creation of Prometheus, is in a sense a justification of our own extension of that enchanted realm beyond the borders of our childhood's "Heaven." We are treading on dangerous ground here ; but the inclusion at the end of the book of

that exquisite little anonymous poem which we have entitled "The Prince of the Fairies," helps to complete the subject, as we feel sure readers will agree.

With respect to the pranks which even the most angelic of the "nurslings of immortality" sometimes played on mortals, the last word—as always—is that of Shakespeare, uttered, in this case, through the lips of Sir Hugh Evans :

"Sir John Falstaff, serf Gott and leaf your desires
and fairies will not pinse you."

The fact that this does not seem to us to cover the whole field of their pranks may be countered again by the remark of Puck :

"Lord, what fools these mortals be."

But, in any case, it gives one a valuable suggestion as to the grim or delicate reality, not only of fairies and elves but of goblins and witches also, in the kingdom of the mind, which has also, surely, its tangled forests, its blasted heaths, its crumbling moonlit casements and its perilous seas.

ALFRED NOYES

THE FAIRY LIFE

*Her Eyes the Glow-worme lend thee,
The Shooting Starres attend thee ;
And the Elves also,
Whose little eyes glow
Like the sparks of fire, befriend thee.*
ROBERT HERRICK

THE FAERY VISION

*I took it for a faery vision
Of some gay creatures of the element
That in the colours of the rainbow live
And play i' the plighted clouds. I was awe-struck,
And as I passed, I worshipped; if those you seek
It were a journey like the path to heaven
To help you find them.*

MILTON

FALSTAFF ON FAIRIES

FALSTAFF. *And these are not fairies? I was three
or four times in the thought they were not fairies; and
yet the guiltiness of my mind, the sudden surprise of my
powers, drove the grossness of the foppery into a
received belief, in despite of the teeth of all rhyme and
reason, that they were fairies. See now how wit may
be made a Jack-a-Lent, when 'tis upon ill employment.*
EVANS. *Sir John Falstaff, serve God, and leave
your desires, and fairies will not pinse you.*

SHAKESPEARE



I KNOW A BANK

I KNOW a bank where the wild thyme blows,
Where oxlips and the nodding violet grows,
Quite overcanopied with luscious wood-bine,
With sweet musk-roses and with eglantine :
There sleeps Titania sometime of the night,
Lulled in these flowers with dances and delight ;
And there the snake throws her enamell'd skin
Weed wide enough to wrap a fairy in.

SHAKESPEARE

THE URCHINS' DANCE

BY the moon we sport and play,
With the night begins our day :
As we frisk the dew doth fall ;
Trip it, little urchins all !
Lightly as the little bee,
Two by two, and three by three,
And about go we, and about go we !

JOHN LYLY



WHERE THE BEE SUCKS

WHERE the bee sucks, there suck I :
In a cowslip's bell I lie ;

There I couch when owls do cry :

On the bat's back I do fly

After summer merrily.

Merrily, merrily shall I live now,

Under the blossom that hangs on the bough !

SHAKESPEARE

NURSLINGS OF IMMORTALITY

ON a Poet's lips I slept
Dreaming like a love-adept
In the sound his breathing kept;
Nor seeks nor finds he mortal blisses,
But feeds on the aërial kisses
Of shapes that haunt thought's wildernesses.
He will watch from dawn to gloom
The lake-reflected sun illumine
The yellow bees in the ivy bloom,
Nor heed nor see what things they be—
But from these create he can
Forms more real than living man,
Nurslings of Immortality !

SHELLEY



NIMPHIDIA THE COVRT OF FAYRIE

OLDE CHAVCER doth of *Topas* tell,
Mad RABLAIS of Pantagruell,
A latter third of *Dowsabell*,

With such poore trifles playing :
Others the like haue laboured at
Some of this thing, and some of that,
And many of they know not what,
But that they must be saying.



Another sort there bee, that will
Be taking of the Fayries still,
Nor neuer can they haue their fill,
As they were wedded to them
No Tales of them their thirst can slake,
So much delight therein they take,
And some strange thing they faine would make,
Knew they the way to doe them



Then since no Muse hath bin so bold,
Or of the Later, or the ould,
Those Eluish secrets to vnfold,
Which lye from others reading,
My actiue Muse to light shall bring,
The court of that proud Fayry King,
And tell there, of the Reueiling,
Ioue prosper my proceeding.

And thou NIMPHIDIA gentle *Fay*,
Which meeting me vpon the way,
These secrets didst to me bewray,
Which now I am in telling :
My pretty light fantastick mayde,

I here inuoke thee to my ayde,
That I may speake what thou hast sayd,
In numbers smoothly swelling

This Pallace standeth in the Ayre,
By Nigromancie placed there,
That it no Tempests needs to feare,
Which way so ere it blow it.
And somewhat Southward tow'rd the Noone,
Whence lyes a way vp to the Moone,
And thence the *Fayrie* can as soone
Passe to the earth below it.

The Walls of Spiders legs are made,
Well mortized and finely layd,
He was the master of his Trade
It curiously that builded :
The Windowes of the eyes of Cats,
And for the Roofe, instead of Slat,
Is couer'd with the skinns of Batts,
With Mooneshine that are gilded.

Hence *Oberon* him sport to make,
(Their rest when weary mortalls take)
And none but onely *Fayries* wake,
Desendeth for his pleasure.
And *Mab* his merry Queene by night
Bestrids young Folks that lye vpright,
(In elder Times the *Mare* that hight)
Which plagues them out of measure.

Hence Shaddowes, seeming Idle shapes,
Of little frisking Elues and Apes,

To Earth doe make their wanton skapes,
As hope of pastime hasts them :
Which maydes think on the Hearth they see,
When Fyers well nere consumed be,
Their daunsing Hayes by two and three,
Iust as their Fancy casts them.

These make our Girles their sluttery rue,
By pinching them both blacke and blew,
And put a penny in their shue,
The house for cleanelly sweeping :
And in their courses make that Round,
In Meadowes, and in Marshes found,
Of them so call'd the *Fayrie* ground,
Of which they haue the keeping.

Thus when a Childe haps to be gott,
Which after prooues an Ideott,
When Folke perceiue it thriueth not,
The fault therein to smother :
Some silly doting brainless Calfe,
That vnderstands things by the halfe,
Say that the *Fayrie* left this Aulfe,
And tooke away the other.

But listen and I shall you tell,
A chance in *Fayrie* that befell,
Which certainly may please some well ;
In Loue and Armes delighting :
Of *Oberon* that Iealous grewe,
Of one of his owne *Fayrie* crue,
Too well (he fear'd) his Queene that knew,
His loue but ill requiting.

Pigwiggen was this *Fayrie* knight,
One wondrous gracious in the sight
Of faire Queene *Mab*, which day and night,
He amorously obserued ;
Which made king *Oberon* suspect,
His Seruice tooke too good effect,
His saucinesse, and often checkt,
And could have wisht him starued.

Pigwiggen gladly would commend,
Some token to queene *Mab* to send,
If Sea, or Land, him ought could lend,
Were worthy of her wearing :
At length this Louer doth deuise,
A Bracelet made of Emmotts eyes,
A thing he thought that shee would prize,
No whitt her state impaying.

And to the Queene a Letter writes,.
Which he most curiously endites,
Coniuring her by all the rites
Of loue, she would be pleased,
To meete him her true Seruant, where
They might without suspect or feare,
Themselues to one another cleare,
And haue their poore hearts eased.

At mid-night the appointed hower,
And for the Queene a fitting bower,
(Quoth he) is that faire Cowslip flower,
On *Hipcut* hill that groweth,
In all your Trayne there's not a *Fay*,
That euer went to gather May,

But she hath made it in her way,
The tallest there that groweth.

When by *Tom Thum* a *Fayrie Page*,
He sent it, and doth him engage,
By promise of a mighty wage,
It secretly to carrie :
Which done, the *Queene* her maydes doth call,
And bids them to be ready all,
She would goe see her *Summer Hall*,
She could no longer tarrie.

Her Chariot ready straight is made,
Each thing therein is fitting layde,
That she by nothing might be stayde,
For naught must be her letting,
Foure nimble Gnats the Horses were,
Their Harnasses of *Gossamere*,
Flye *Cranion* her Chariottere,
Vpon the *Coach-box* getting.

Her Chariot of a *Snayles* fine shell,
Which for the colours did excell :
The faire *Queen Mab*, becomming well,
So liuely was the limming :
The seate the soft wooll of the Bee ;
The couer, (gallantly to see)
The wing of a pyde *Butterflee*,
I trowe 'twas simple trimming.

The wheelles compos'd of *Crickets* bones,
And daintily made for the nonce,
For feare of ratling on the stones,

With Thistle-downe they shod it ;
For all her Maydens much did feare
If *Oberon* had chanc'd to heare,
That *Mab* his Queen should haue bin there,
He would not haue aboad it.

She mounts her Chariot with a trice,
Nor would she stay for no advice,
Vntill her Maydes that were so nice,
To wayte on her were fitted,
But ranne her selfe away alone ;
Which when they heard there was not one,
But hasted after to be gone,
As she had beene diswitted.

Hop, and *Mop*, and *Drop* so cleare,
Pip, and *Trip*, and *Skip* that were,
To *Mab* their Soueraigne euer deare :
Her speciall Maydes of Honour ;
Fib, and *Tib*, and *Pinck*, and *Pin*,
Tick, and *Quick*, and *Iill*, and *Iin*,
Tit, and *Nit*, and *Wap*, and *Win*,
The Trayne that wayte vpon her.

Vpon a Grashopper they got,
And what with Amble, and with Trot,
For hedge nor ditch they spared not,
But after her they hie them.
A Cobweb ouer them they throw,
To shield the winde if it should blowe,
Themselues they wisely could bestowe,
Lest any should espie them.

But let vs leaue Queen *Mab* a while,
Through many a gate, o'r many a stile,
That now had gotten by this wile,
Her dear *Pigwiggin* kissing,
And tell how *Oberon* doth fare,
Who grew as mad as any Hare,
When he had sought each place with care,
And found his Queen was missing.

By grisly *Pluto* he doth swear,
He rent his cloths, and tore his haire,
And as he runneth, here and there,
An Acorne cup he greeteth ;
Which soone he taketh by the stalke
About his head he lets it walke,
Nor doth he any creature balke,
But lays on all he meeteth.

The *Thuskan* Poet doth aduance,
The franticke *Paladine* of France,
And those more ancient doe inhaunce,
Alcides in his fury.
And others *Ajax Telamon*,
But to this time there hath bin non,
So Bedlam as our *Oberon*,
Of which I dare assure you.

And first encountring with a waspe,
He in his armes the Fly doth claspe
As though his breath he forth would graspe,
Him for *Pigwiggen* taking :
Where is my wife thou Rogue, quoth he,
Pigwiggen, she is come to thee,

Restore her, or thou dy'st by me,
Whereat the poore waspe quaking,

Cryes, *Oberon*, great *Fayrie* King,
Content thee I am no such thing,
I am a Waspe behold my sting,

At which the *Fayrie* started :
When soone the Waspe away doth goe,
Poore wretch was neuer frightened so,
He thought his wings were much too slow, -
O'erjoyed, they so were parted.

He next vpon a Glow-worme light,
(You must suppose it now was night),
Which for her hinder part was bright,
He tooke to be a Deuill,
And furiously doth her assaile
For carrying fier in her taile
He thrasht her rough coat with his flayle,
The mad King fear'd no euill.

O quoth the *Gloworme* hold thy hand,
Thou puissant King of *Fayrie* land,
Thy mighty stroaks who may withstand,
Hould, or of life despaire I :
Together then her selfe doth roule,
And tumbling downe into a hole,
She seem'd as black as any Cole,
Which vext away the *Fayrie*.

From thence he ran into a Hiue,
Amongst the Bees he letteth driue
And downe their Coombes begins to riue,

All likely to haue spoyled :
Which with their Waxe his face besmeard,
And with their Honey daub'd his Beard
It would haue made a man afear'd,
To see how he was moyled.

A new Aduenture him betides,
He mett an Ant, which he bestrides,
And post thereon away he rides,
Which with his haste doth stumble ;
And came full ouer on her snowte,
Her heels so threw the dirt about,
For she by no meanes could get out,
But ouer him doth tumble.

And being in this piteous case,
And all be-slurried head and face,
On runs he in this Wild-goose chase
As here, and there, he rambles
Halfe blinde, against a molehill hit,
And for a Mountaine taking it,
For all he was out of his wit,
Yet to the top he scrambles.

And being gotten to the top,
Yet there himselfe he could not stop,
But downe on th' other side doth chop,
And to the foot came rumbling :
So that the Grubs therein that bred,
Hearing such turmoyle ouer head,
Thought surely they had all bin deed,
So fearefull was the Iumbling.

And falling downe into a *Lake*,
Which him vp to the neck doth take,
His fury somewhat it doth slake,
He calleth for a *Ferry* ;
Where you may some recouery note,
What was his *Club* he made his *Boate*,
And in his *Oaken Cup* doth float,
As safe as in a *Wherry*.

Men talke of the *Aduentures* strange,
Of *Don Quishott*, and of their change
Through which he *Armed* oft did range,
Of *Sancha Panchas* trauell :
But should a man tell euery thing,
Done by this franticke *Fayrie* king.
And them in lofty numbers sing
It well his wits might grauell.

Scarse set on shore, but therewithall,
He meeteth *Pucke*, which most men call
Hobgoblin, and on him doth fall,
With words from frenzy spoken ;
Hoh, hoh, quoth *Hob*, God saue thy grace,
Who drest thee in this pitteous case,
He thus that spoild my soueraignes face,
I would his necke were broken.

This *Puck* seemes but a dreaming dolt,
Still walking like a ragged *Colt*,
And oft out of a *Bush* doth bolt,
Of purpose to deceiue vs.
And leading vs makes vs to stray,
Long *Winters* nights out of the way,
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And when we stick in mire and clay,
Hob doth with laughter leaue vs.

Deare *Puck* (quoth he) my wife is gone
As ere thou lou'st King *Oberon*,
Let euery thing but this alone
With vengeance, and pursue her ;
Bring her to me aliue or dead,
Or that vilde thief, *Pigwiggens* head,
That villaine hath defil'd my bed
He to this folly drew her.

Quoth *Puck*, My Liege Ile neuer lin,
But I will thorough thicke and thinne,
Vntil at length I bring her in,
My dearest Lord nere doubt it :
Thorough Brake, thorough Brier,
Thorough Muck, thorough Mier,
Thorough Water, thorough Fier,
And thus goes *Puck* about it.

This thing *NIMPHIDIA* ouer hard
That on this mad King had a guard
Not doubting of a great reward,
For first this businesse broching ;
And through the ayre away doth goe
Swift as an Arrow from the Bowe,
To let her Soueraigne *Mab* to know,
What perill was approaching.

The Queene bound with Loues powerfulst charme
Sate with *Pigwigen* arme in arme,
Her Merry Maydes that thought no harme,

About the roome were skipping :
A Humble-Bee their Minstrell, playde
Vpon his Hoboy ; eu'ry Mayde
Fit for this Reuells was arayde,
The Hornepype neatly tripping.

In comes *Nymphidia*, and doth crie,
My Soueraigne for your safety flie,
For there is danger but too nie,
I posted to forewarne you :
The King hath sent *Hobgoblin* out,
To seeke you all the Fields about,
And of your safety you may doubt,
If he but once discerne you.

When like an vprore in a Towne,
Before them euery thing went downe,
Some tore a Ruffe, and some a Gowne,
Gainst one another iustling :
They flewe about like Chaffe i' th winde,
For hast some left their Maskes behinde ;
Some could not stay their Gloues to finde,
There neuer was such bustling.

Forth ranne they by a secret way,
Into a brake that neere them lay ;
Yet much they doubted there to stay,
Lest *Hob* should hap to find them :
He had a sharpe and piercing sight,
All one to him the day and night,
And therefore were resolu'd by flight,
To leave this place behind them.

At length one chanc'd to find a Nut,
In th' end of which a hole was cut,
Which lay vpon a Hazell roote.

There scatt'ed by a Squirill :
Which out the kernell gotten had ;
When quoth this *Fay* deare Queene be glad,
Let *Oberon* be ne'r so mad,
Ile set you safe from perill.

Come all into this Nut (quoth she)
Come closely in be rul'd by me,
Each one may here a chuser be,
For roome yee need not wrastle :
Nor neede yee be together heapt ;
So one by one therein they crept,
And lying downe they soundly slept,
And safe as in a Castle.

Nymphidia that this while doth watch,
Perceiu'd if *Puck* the Queene should catch
That he should be her ouer-match,
Of which she well bethought her ;
Found it must be some powerfull Charme,
The Queene against him that must arme,
Or surely he would doe her harme,
For throughly he had sought her.

And listning if she ought could heare,
That her might hinder, or might feare :
But finding still the coast was cleare,
Nor creature had discride her ;
Each circumstance and hauing scand,
She came thereby to vnderstand,

Puck would be with them out of hand
When to her Charmes she hide her :

And first her Ferne seede doth bestowe,
The kernell of the Missletowe :
And here and there as *Puck* should goe,
With terrour to affright him :
She Night-shade strawes to work him ill,
Therewith her Veruayne and her Dill,
That hindreth Witches of their will,
Of purpose to dispiht him.

Then sprinkles she the iuice of Rue,
That groweth vnderneath the Yeu :
With nine drops of the midnight dewe,
From Lunarie distilling :
The Molewarps brain mixt therewithall ;
And with the same the Pismyres gall,
For she in nothing short would fall ;
The *Fayrie* was so willing.

Then thrice vnder a Bryer doth creepe,
Which at both ends was rooted deepe,
And ouer it three times shee leepe ;
Her Magicke much auayling :
Then on *Proserpyna* doth call,
And so vpon her spell doth fall,
Which here to you repeate I shall,
Not in one tittle fayling.

By the croking of the Frogge ;
By the howling of the Dogge ;
By the crying of the Hogge,

Against the storme arising ;
By the Euening Curphewe bell ;
By the dolefull dying knell,
O let this my direfull Spell,
Hob, hinder thy surprising.

By the Mandrakes dreadfull groanes ;
By the Lubricans sad moans ;
By the noyse of dead mens bones,
In Charnell houses ratling :
By the hissing of the Snake,
The rustling of the fire-Drake,
I charge thee thou this place forsake,
Nor of Queene *Mab* be pratling.

By the Whirlwindes hollow sound,
By the Thunders dreadfull stound,
Yells of Spirits vnder ground,
I charge thee not to feare vs :
By the Shreech-owles dismall note,
By the Blacke Night-Rauens throate,
I charge thee *Hob* to teare thy Coate
With thornes if thou come neere vs,

Her Spell thus spoke she stept aside,
And in a Chincke her selfe doth hide,
To see there of what would betyde,
For shee doth onely minde him :
When presently shee *Puck* espies,
And well she markt his gloating eyes,
How vnder euery leafe he spies,
In seeking still to finde them.

But once the Circle got within,
The Charmes to worke doe straight begin,
And he was caught as in a Gin ;

For as he thus was busie,
A paine he in his Head-peece feeles,
Against a stubbed Tree He reeles,
And vp went poore *Hobgoblins* heeles,
Alas his braine was dizzie.

At length vpon his feete he gets,
Hobgoblin fumes, *Hobgoblin* frets,
And as againe he forward sets,
And through the bushes scrambles ;
A Stump doth trip him in his pace,
Downe comes poore *Hob* vpon his face,
And lamentably tore his case,
Amongst the Bryers and Brambles.

A plague vpon Queene *Mab*, quoth hee,
And all her Maydes where ere they be,
I thinke the Deuill guided me,
To seeke her so prouoked.
Where stumbling at a piece of Wood,
He fell into a dich of mudd,
Where to the very Chin he stood,
In danger to be choked.

Now worse than e'er he was before :
Poore *Puck* doth yell, poore *Puck* doth rore ;
That wak'd Queene *Mab* who doubted sore
Some Treason had been wrought her :
Vntill *Nymphidia* told the Queene
What she had done, what she had seene,

Who then had well-neere crack'd her spleene
With very extreame laughter.

But leaue we *Hob* to clamber out:
Queene *Mab* and all her *Fayrie* rout,
And come againe to haue about
With *Oberon* yet madding :
And with *Pigwigen* now distrought,
Who much was troubled in his thought,
That he so long the Queene had sought,
And through the Fields was gadding.

And as he runnes he still doth crie,
King *Oberon* I thee defie,
And dare thee here in Armes to trie,
For my deare Ladies honour :
For that she is a Queene right good,
In whose defence Ile shed my blood,
And that thou in this iealous mood
Hast lay'd this slander on her.

And quickly Armes him for the Field,
A little Cockle-shell his Shield,
Which he could very brauely wield :
Yet could it not be pierced :
His Speare a Bent both stiffe and strong,
And well-neere of two Inches long ;
The Pyle was of a Horse-flyes tongue,
Whose sharpnesse nought reuersed.

And puts him on a coate of Male,
Which was of a Fishes scale,
That when his Foe should him assaile,

No poynt should be preuayling :
His Rapier was a Hornets sting,
It was a very dangerous thing :
For if he chanc'd to hurt the King,
It would be long in healing.

His Helmet was a Bettles head,
Most horrible and full of dread,
That able was to strike one dead,
Yet did it well become him :
And for a plume, a horses hayre,
Which being tossed with the ayre,
Had force to strike his Foe with feare,
And turne his weapon from him.

Himselfe he on an Earewig set,
Yet scarce he on his back could get,
So oft and high he did coruet,
Ere he himselfe could settle :
He made him turne, and stop, and bound,
To gallop, and to trot the Round,
He scarce could stand on any ground,
He was so full of mettle.

When soone he met with *Tomalin*,
One that a valiant Knight had bin,
And to King *Oberon* of kin ;
Quoth he thou manly *Fayrie* :
Tell *Oberon* I come prepar'd,
Then bid him stand vpon his Guard ;
This hand his basenesse shall reward,
Let him be ne'r so wary.

Say to him thus, that I defie,
His slanders, and his infamie,
And as a mortall enemie,
Doe publickly proclaime him :
Withall, that if I had mine owne,
He should not weare the *Fayrie* Crowne,
But with a vengeance should come downe :
Nor we a King should name him.

This *Tomalin* could not abide,
To heare his Soueraigne vilefide :
But to the *Fayrie* Court him hide ;
Full furiously he posted,
With eu'ry thing *Pigwiggen* sayd :
How title to the Crowne he layd,
And in what Armes he was aray'd,
As how himselfe he boasted.

Twixt head and foot, from point to point,
He told th'arming of each ioint,
In every piece, how neate, and quainte,
For *Tomalin* could doe it :
How fayre he sat, how sure he rid,
As of the courser be bestrid,
How Mannag'd, and how well he did ;
The King which listened to it,

Quoth he, goe *Tomalin* with speede,
Prouide me Armes, prouide my Steed,
And euery thing that I shall neede,
By thee I will be guided ;
To strait account, call thou thy witt,
See there be wanting not a whitt,

In euery thing see thou me fitt,
Just as my foes prouided.

Soone flewe this newes through *Fayrie* land
Which gaue Queene *Mab* to vnderstand,
The combate that was then in hand,
Betwixt those men so mighty :
Which greatly she began to rew,
Perceiuing that all *Fayrie* knew,
The first occasion from her grew,
Of these affaires so weighty.

Wherefore attended with her maides,
Through fogs, and mists, and dampes she wades
To *Proserpine* the Queene of shades
To treat, that it would please her,
The cause into her hands to take,
For ancient loue and friendships sake,
And soone therof an end to make,
Which of much care would ease her.

A While, there let we *Mab* alone,
And come we to King *Oberon*,
Who arm'd to meete his foe is gone,
For Proud *Pigwigen* crying :
Who sought the *Fayrie* King as fast,
And had so well his iourneyes cast,
That he arriued at the last,
His puisant foe espying :

Stout *Tomalin* came with the King,
Tom Thum doth on *Pigwigen* bring,
That perfect were in euery thing,
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To single fights belonging :
And therefore they themselues ingage,
To see them exercise their rage,
With faire and comely equipage,
Not one the other wronging.

So like in armes, these champions were,
As they had bin, a very paire,
So that a man would almost sweare,
That either, had bin either ;
Their furious steedes began to naye
That they were heard a mighty way,
Their staues vpon their rests they lay ;
Yet e'r they flew together,

Their Seconds minister on oath,
Which was indifferent to them both,
That on their Knightly faith, and troth,
No magicke them supplied ;
And sought them that they had no charmes,
Wherewith to worke each others harmes,
But came with simple open armes,
To haue their causes tryed.

Together furiously they ran,
That to the ground came horse and man,
The blood out of their Helmets span,
So sharpe were their incounters ;
And though they to the earth were throwne,
Yet quickly they regain'd their owne,
Such nimblenesse was neuer showne,
They were two Gallant Mounters.

When in a second Course againe,
They forward came with might and mayne,
Yet which had better of the twaine,
The Seconds could not iudge yet ;
Their shields were into pieces cleft,
Their helmets from their heads were reft,
And to defend them nothing left,
These Champions would not budge yet.

Away from them their Staues they threw,
Their cruell Swords they quickly drew,
And freshly they the fight renewed ;
They euery stroke redoubled :
Which made *Proserpina* take heed,
And make to them the greater speed,
For fear last they too much should bleed,
Which wondrously her troubled.

When to th' infernal *Stix* she goes,
She takes the Fogs from thence that rose,
And in a Bagge doth them enclose ;
When well she had them blended :
She hyes her then to *Lethe* spring,
A Bottell and thereof doth bring,
Wherewith she meant to worke the thing,
Which onely she intended.

Now *Proserpine* with *Mab* is gone
Vnto the place where *Oberon*
And proud *Pigwiggen*, one to one,
Both to be slaine were likely :
And there themselues they closely hide,
Because they would not be espide ;

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For *Proserpine* meant to decide
The matter very quickly.

And suddainly vntyes the Poke,
Which out of it sent such a smoke,
As ready was them all to choke,
So greeuous was the pother ;
So that the Knights each other lost,
And stood as still as any post,
Tom Thum, nor *Tomalin* could boast
Themselues of any other.

But when the mist gan somewhat cease,
Proserpina commanded peace :
And that a while they should release,
Each other of their perill :
Which here (quoth she) I doe proclaime
To all in dreadful *Plutos* name,
That as yee will eschewe his blame,
You let me heare the quarrell,

But here your selues you must engage,
Somewhat to coole your spleenish rage :
You greeuous thirst and to asswage,
That first you drinke this liquor :
Which shall your vnderstanding cleare,
As plainely shall to you appeare ;
Those things from me that you shall heare
Conceiuing much the quicker.

This *Lethe* water you must knowe,
The memory destroyeth so,
That of our weale, or of our woe,

It all remembrance blotted ;
Of it nor can you ever thinke :
For they no sooner tooke the drink,
But nought into their braines could sinke,
Of what had them besotted.

King Oberon forgotten had,
That he for iealousie ranne mad :
But of his Queene was wondrous glad,
And asked how they came thither :
Pigwigen likewise doth forget,
That he Queene Mab had ever met ;
Or that they were so hard beset ;
When they were found together.

Nor neither of them both had thought,
That e'er they had each other sought ;
Much less that they a combat fought,
But such a dream were lothing :
Tom Thum had got a little sup,
And *Tomalin* scarce kist the cup,
Yet had their braines so sure lockt up,
That they remembered nothing.

Queene Mab and her light Maydes the while,
Amongst themselves do closely smile,
To see the King caught with this wile,
With one another iesting :
And to the Fayrie Court they writ,
With mickle joy and merriment,
Which thing was done with good intent,
And thus I left them feasting.

MICHAEL DRAYTON.

MORGANA

UPON a lark's back, safe and soft,
Jaunty Morgana sits aloft ;
And, while the sun-bird fans and sings,
Peeps through the lattice of his wings
At all beneath : Her light attendant
Osme, floats like a starry pendant
Beside the Queen ; to do her best
Where'er her majesty thinks best.

Morgana. By this, I think, our host should be assembled.

Thou gav'st command to Nephon ?

Osme.

Madam, I did.

Morgana. Where he should place his guards and line our bounds.

Securely, did'st thou ?

Osme.

Yes, so please your Highness,
He would convene, too, on the level sward,
Minstrels and Morris-dancers——

Morgana.

Foolish sprite !

We shall have other feats anon. Two fiends
Already have transgressed my flowery verge,
And borne a sleeping shepherdess away.
Well, if no more : but, from your woods I deem
War, like a couchant lion, waits to spring
At opportunity. Flit down, and know
What has been done : my breast is full of cares
Both for my kingdom and my shepherd twain.

Osme. A fairy Iris, I will make my bow,
Of a bent sunbeam, and glide down as swift
As minnow doth a waterfall.

[*Vanishes.*]

Morgana. She lights !
And bird-like wings into the woody Vale,
Full of her errand. It is featly done.—
Fall midway to the Earth, sweet Lark ! I pray.
GEORGE DARLEY

PUCK'S SONG

SEE you the dimpled track that runs,
All hollow through the wheat?
O that was where they hauled the guns
That smote King Philip's fleet.

See you our little mill that clacks,
So busy by the brook?
She has ground her corn and paid her tax
Ever since Domesday Book.

See you our stilly woods of oak
And the dread ditch beside?
O that was where the Saxons broke,
On the day that Harold died.

See you the windy levels spread
About the gates of Rye?
O that was where the Northmen fled,
When Alfred's ships came by.

See you our pastures wide and lone,
Where the red oxen browse?
O there was a city thronged and known,
Ere London boasted a house.

And see you, after rain, the trace
Of mound and ditch and wall?
O that was a Legion's camping-place,
When Cæsar sailed from Gaul.

And see you marks that show and fade,
Like shadows on the Downs ?
O they are the lines the Flint Men made,
To guard their wondrous towns.

Trackway and Camp and City lost,
Salt marsh where now is corn ;
Old Wars, old Peace, old Arts that cease,
And so was England born !

She is not any common Earth,
Water or wood or air,
But Merlin's Isle of Gramarye
Where you and I will fare.

RUDYARD KIPLING

MODERN ELFLAND

I CUT a staff in a churchyard copse,
I clad my-self in ragged things,
I set a feather in my cap
That fell out of an angel's wings.

I filled my wallet with white stones,
I took three foxgloves in my hand,
I slung my shoes across my back,
And so I went to fairyland.

But lo, within that ancient place
Science had reared her iron crown,
And the great cloud of steam went up
That telleth where she takes a town.

But cowed with smoke and starred with lamps
That strange land's light was still its own ;
The word that witched the woods and hills
Spoke in the iron and the stone.

Not Nature's hand had ever curved
That mute unearthly porter's spine,
Like sleeping dragon's sullen eyes
The signals leered along the line.

The chimneys thronging crooked or straight
Were fingers signalling the sky ;
The dog that strayed across the street
Seemed four-legged by monstrosity.

"In vain," I cried, "though you too touch
The new time's desecrating hand,

Through all the noises of a town
I hear the heart of fairyland."

I read the name above a door,
Then through my spirit pealed and passed :
This is the town of thine own home
And thou hast looked on it at last.

G. K. CHESTERTON



A FAIRY TALE

ON Hounslow Heath—and close beside the road,
As western travellers may oft have seen,—
A little house some years ago there stood,
A miniken abode ;
And built like Mr. Birkbeck's all of wood :
The walls of white, the window-shutters green,—
Four wheels it hath at North, South, East, and West,
(Though now at rest)
On which it used to wander to and fro,
Because its master ne'er maintain'd a rider,
Like those who trade in Paternoster Row ;
But made his business travel for itself,
Till he had made his pelf,
And then retired—if one may call it so,
Of a roadsider.

Perchance, the very race and constant riot
Of stages, long and short, which thereby ran,
Made him more relish the repose and quiet
Of his now sedentary caravan ;
Perchance, he loved the ground because 'twas common,
And so he might impale a strip of soil
That furnished, by his toil,
Some dusty greens, for him and his old woman :—
And five tall hollyhocks, in dingy flower,
Howbeit, the thoroughfare did no ways spoil
His peace, unless, in some unlucky hour,
A stray horse came, and gobbled up his bow'r.

But tired of always looking at the coaches,
The same to come,—when they had seen them one day !
And, used to brisker life, both man and wife

Began to suffer N U E's approaches,
And feel retirement like a long wet Sunday,—
So, having had some quarters of school breeding,
They turned themselves, like other folks, to reading ;
But setting out where others nigh have done,
 And being ripened in the seventh stage,
 The childhood of old age,
Began, as other children have begun,—
Not with the pastorals of Mr. Pope,
 Or Bard of Hope,
Or Paley ethical, or learned Porson,—
But spelt, on Sabbaths, in St. Mark, or John,
And then relax'd themselves with Whittington,
 Or Valentine and Orson—
But chiefly fairy tales they loved to con,
And being easily melted in their dotage,
 Slobber'd,—and kept
 Reading,—and wept
Over the white Cat, in their wooden cottage.

Thus reading on—the longer
They read, of course, their childish faith grew stronger
In Gnomes, and Hags, and Elves, and Giants grim,—
If talking Trees and Birds revealed to him,
She saw the flight of Fairyland's fly-waggons,
 And magic fishes swim
In puddle ponds, and took old crows for dragons,—
Both were quite drunk from the enchanted flagons ;
When as it fell upon a summer's day,
 As the old man sat a feeding
 On the old babe-reading,
Beside his open street-and-parlour door,
 A hideous roar

Proclaimed a drove of beasts was coming by the way.
Long-horned, and short, of many a different breed,
Tall, tawny brutes, from famous Lincoln-levels
Or Durham feed ;

With some of those unquiet black dwarf devils
From nether side of Tweed,
Of Firth of Forth ;

Looking half wild with joy to leave the North,—
With dusty hides, all mobbing on together,—
When,—whether from a fly's malicious comment
Upon his tender flank, from which he shrank ;
Or whether

Only in some enthusiastic moment,—
However, one brown monster, in a frisk,
Giving his tale a perpendicular whisk,
Kicked out a passage through the beastly rabble ;
And after a pas seul,—or, if you will, a
Horn-pipe before the Basket-maker's villa,
Leapt o'er the tiny pale,—

Backed his beefsteaks against the wooden gable,
And thrust his brawny bell-rope of a tail
Right o'er the page,
Wherein the sage

Just then was spelling some romantic fable.

The old man, half a scholar, half a dunce,
Could not peruse,—who could ?—two tales at once ;
And being huffed

At what he knew was none of Riquet's Tuft ;
Banged-to the door,

But most unluckily enclosed a morsel
Of the intruding tail, and all the tassel :—
The monster gave a roar,

And bolting off with speed increased by pain,
The little house became a coach once more,
And, like Macheath, "took to the road" again!

Just then, by fortune's whimsical decree,
The ancient woman stooping with her crupper
Towards sweet home, or where sweet home should be,
Was getting up some household herbs for supper;
Thoughtful of Cinderella, in the tale,
And quaintly wondering if magic shifts
Could o'er a common pumpkin so prevail,
To turn it to a coach;—what pretty gifts
Might come of cabbages, and curly kale;
Meanwhile she never heard her old man's wail,
Nor turned, till home had turned a corner, quite
Gone out of sight!

At last, conceive her, rising from the ground,
Weary of sitting on her russet clothing
And looking round
Where rest was to be found,
There was no house—no villa there—no nothing!
No house!

The change was quite amazing;
It made her senses stagger for a minute,
The riddle's explication seemed to harden;
But soon her superannuated *nous*
Explain'd the horrid mystery;—and raising
Her hand to heaven, with the cabbage in it,
On which she meant to sup,—
"Well! this *is* Fairy Work! I'll bet a farden,
Little Prince Silverwings has ketch'd me up,
And set me down in some one else's garden!"

Tom Hood

A FAIRY MUSTER

FAIR lady, or sweet sir, who look,
Perchance, into this wayward book,
Lay by your scenic eyes a moment ;
It is not for a raree-show meant.
I've now some higher work to do
Than stipple graphic scenes for you.
Suffice to say, that smoother glade
Kept greener by a deeper shade,
Never by antlered form was trod ;
Never was strown by that white crowd
Which nips with pettish haste the grass ;
Never was lain upon by lass
In harvest-time when Love is tipsy,
And steals to coverts like a gipsy
There to unmask his ruby face
In unreprieved luxuriousness.
'Tis true, in brief, of this sweet place,
What the tanned Moon-bearer did feign
Of one rich spot in his own Spain :
The part just o'er it in the skies
Is the true seat of Paradise.

Have you not oft, in the still wind,
Heard sylvan notes of a strange kind
That rose one moment, and then fell
Swooning away like a far knell ?
Listen ! that wave of perfume broke
Into sea-music as I spoke,
Fainter than that which seems to roar
On the moon's silver-sanded shore,
When through the silence of the night
Is heard the ebb and flow of light.

O shut the eye, and ope the ear !
Do you not hear, or think you hear,
A wide hush o'er the woodland pass
Like distant waving fields of grass ?
Voices ? ho ! ho ! a band is coming,
Loud as ten thousand bees a-humming,
Or ranks of little merry men,
Tromboning deeply from the glen.
And now, as if they changed and rung
Their citterns small, and riband slung,
Over their gallant shoulders hung !
A chant ! a chant ! that swoons and swells,
Like soft wind jangling meadow-bells ;
Now brave as when in Flora's bower
Gay Zephyr blows a trumpet flower ;
Now thrilling fine, and sharp, and clear,
Like Dion's moonbeam dulcimer ;
But mixt with whoops, and infant laughter,
Shouts following one another after,
As on a hearty holyday,
When Youth is flush, and full of May ;
Small shouts, indeed, as wild bees knew
Both how to hum and hollo, too.
What ! is the living meadow sown
With dragon teeth, as long agoe ?
Or is an army on the plains
Of this sweet clime, to fight with cranes ?
Helmet and hauberk, pike and lance,
Gorget and glaive through the long grass glance ;
Red men and blue men, and buff men small,
Loud-mouthed captains, and ensigns tall,
Grenadiers, light-bohs, inch people all,
They come ! they come ! with martial blore

Clearing a terrible path before ;
Ruffle the high-peak'd flags i' the wind,
Mourn the long-answering trumpets behind,
Telling how deep the close files are—
Make way for the stalwart sons of war !
Hurrah ! the buff-cheeked bugle band,
Each with a loud reed in his hand !
Hurrah ! the pattering company,
Each with a drum-bell at his knee !
Hurrah ! the sash-capt cymbal swingers !
Hurrah ! the kingle-klangle ringers !
Hurrah ! hurrah ! the elf-knights enter,
Each with his grasshopper at a canter ?
His tough spear of a wild oak made,
His good sword of a grassy blade,
His buckram suit of shining laurel,
His shield of bark, embossed with coral,
See how the plummy champion keeps
His proud steed clambering on his hips,
With foaming jaw pinned to his breast,
Blood-rolling eyes and arched crest !
Over his and his rider's head
A broad-sheet butterfly banner spread,
Swoops round the staff in varying form .
Flouts the soft breeze, but courts the storm.

Hard on the prancing heels of these
Come on the pigmy Thyades !
Mimics and mummers, masqueraders,
Soft flutists and sweet serenaders,
Guitaring o'er the level green,
Or tapping the parch'd tambourine,
As swaying to, and swaying fro,

Over the stooping flowers they go,
That laugh within their greeny breasts
To feel such light feet on their crests,
And ev'n themselves a-dancing seem
Under the weight that presses them.

But hark ! the trumpet's royal clangour
Strikes silence with a voice of anger :
Raising its broad mouth to the sun
As he would bring Apollo down,
The in-backed, swoln, elf-winder fills
With its great roar the fairy hills ;
Each woodland tuft for terror shakes,
The field-mouse in her mansion quakes,
The heart-struck wren falls through the branches,
Wide stares the ear-wig on his haunches ;
From trees which mortals take for flowers
Leaves of all hues fall off in showers ;
So strong the blast, the voice so dread,
'Twould wake the very fairy-dead !

Disparted now, half to each side,
Athwart the curled moss they glide,
Then wheel and front, to edge the scene,
Leaving a spacious glade between ;
With small round eyes that twinkle bright
As moon-tears on the grass of night,
They stand spectorial, anxious all,
Like guests ranged down a dancing hall.
Some graceful pair, or more, to see
Winding along in melody.

Nor pine their little orbs in vain,
For borne in with an oaten strain

Three petty Graces, arm entwined,
Reel in the light curls of the wind ;
Their flimsy pinions sprouted high
Lift them half-dancing as they fly ;
Like a bright wheel spun on its side
The rapt three round their centre slide,
And as their circling has no end
Voice into sister voice they blend,
Weaving a labyrinthine song
Wild as the rings they trace along,
A dizzy tipsy roundelay,—
Which I am not to sing, but they.

TRIO.

We the sun's bright daughters be !
As our golden wings may show ;
Every land, and every sea,
Echoes our sweet ho-ran-ho !
Round, and round, and round we go
Singing our sweet ho-an-ho !

Over heath, and over hill,
Ho-ran, hi-ran, ho-ran, ho !
At the wind's unruly will
Round, and round, and round we go.

Into cave, and into wood,
Ho-ran, hi-ran, ho-ran ho !
Light as bubbles down the flood,
Round, and round, and round we go.

By the many tasselled bowers,
Ho-ran, hi-ran, ho-ran ho !

Skimming precious bosom flowers
Round, and round, and round we go.

Dimpling o'er the grassy meads,
Ho-ran, hi-ran, ho-ran ho !
Shaking gems from jewelled lands,
Round, and round, and round we go.

After bee, and after gnat,
Ho-ran, hi-ran, ho-ran ho !
Hunting bird, and chasing bat,
Round, and round, and round we go.

Unto North, and unto South,
Ho-ran, hi-ran, ho-ran ho !
In a trice to visit both,
Round, and round, and round we go.

To the East, and to the West,
Ho-ran, hi-ran, ho-ran ho !
To the place that we love best,
Round, and round, and round we go.

First Elve. Sweet ! sweet !

Second Elve. O how finely
They do spark their feet !

Third Elve. Divinely !

I can scarcely keep from dancing,
Tis so wild a measure !

Fourth Elve. E'en the heavy steeds are prancing
With uneasy pleasure !

Second Elve. Smooth the cadence of the music,
Smooth as wind.

Fifth Elve. O me !—I'm dew-sick !—

All. Glutton ! glutton ! you've been drinking
Till your very eyes are winking !

Fourth Elve. Put him to bed in that green tuft.

Second Elve. He should not have a bed so soft !

First Elve. Let him be toss'd into a thistle !

Third Elve. We'll tease his nose with barley-bristle !

Sixth Elve. Or paint his face with that ceruse
Which our fine bella-donnas use,
The sweet conserve of maiden blushes.

First Elve. Or cage him in a crib of rushes ;
There let him lie in verdant jail
Till he out-mourns the nightingale.

Fourth Elve. Sad thing ! what shall become of thee,
When thy light nature wanes to something new ?
Say'st thou, sad thing ?—

Fifth Elve. O let me, let me be
A gliding minnow in a stream of dew !

Second Elve. The sot !

First Elve. The dolt :

Sixth Elve. The epicure !
'Twere wrong to call him else, I'm sure.

Each twilight-come
At beetle-drum
For nectar he a-hunting goes,
The twisted bine
He stoops for wine,
Or sups it fresh from off the rose.

In violet blue
He pokes for dew,
And gapes at Heaven for starry tears ;

Till Phœbus laughs,
He crows and quaffs,
Fighting the lark with bacchant cheers.

From night till morn
His amberhorn
He fills at every honey-fountain,
And draineth up
Each flowery cup
That brims with balm on mead on mountain.

Second Elve. Hi ! hi !

Fourth Elve. Whither ? whither ?

Second Elve. I must try
To get that feather
Floating near the stilly sun.

Fourth Elve. Now you have it, clap it on !
What a gallant bonnet-plume,
Ruby-black with golden bloom !

Second Elve. It must have belonged, I swear,
To some gaudy bird of air ;
One of the purple-crested team who fly
With the Junonion curricule ;
Or he that with rich breast, and tawny eye,
Flames at the Sminthian chariot-wheel.

First Elve. But where is Nephon ? who can tell ?

Seventh Elve. How wondrous grand he's grown of
late !

Eighth Elve. And walks so high ! and slaps his pate
Ten times a moment, as the state
Of Fairyland depended on him,
Or tit-mice had agreed to crown him.

Third Elve. And takes such mighty airs upon him

As I can witness ; 'twas but now
I challenged him to ride the bough,
When pursing bigly—"Silly thou ?
Trouble me not," said he, and stalked
As stiff as if a radish walked
Past me, forsooth !

First Elve. He has not talked
Of any body but himself
This mortal day.

Second Elve. Conceited elf !
Would he were bottled on a shelf !

Osme. Fay-ladies be not scandalous,
Oh speak not of poor Nephon thus !

Third Elve. Then wherefore should he sneer at us ?

Seventh Elve. He grows more haughty every day,
'Cause he's the Queen's factotal fay,
And scorns with other elves to play.

Fourth Elve. When will his Excellence appear ?

Osme. He sent a wild-dove messenger
To bid us all assemble here,
On the green glade ; for he had some
Great work in hand.—

Seventh Elve. The saucy gnome !
"Bid us," forsooth !

Floretta. I wish he'd come !
I hear on distant heaths behind,
A hare-bell weeping to the wind,
Unkind Floretta ! ah, unkind,
To leave me thus forsaken !

Osme. I
Will mount a crowback to the sky
Morgana waits for me on high.

[*Laughter without*]

D

All. Hist ! hist !

[*Without*] Ha ! ha ! ha !

All. List ! list !

[*Without*] Ha ! ha ! ha !

All. In the noisy name of thunder,
What is all this rout, I wonder ?

[*Without*] Ha ! ha ! ha ! ha ! ha !

Enter NEPHON with his lap full of flowers

Nephton. Lady and gentlemen fays, come buy !
No pedlar has such a rich packet as I.

Who wants a gown
Of purple fold,
Embroidered down
The seams with gold ?
See here ! a Tulip richly laced,
To please a royal fairy's taste !

Who wants a cap
Of crimson grand ?
By great good hap
I've one on hand.
Look, sir ! a Cock's-comb, flowering red—
'Tis just the thing, sir, for your head !

Who wants a frock
Of vestal hue ?
Or snowy smock ?—
Fair maid, do you ?
O me !—a Ladysmock so white !
Your bosom's self is not more bright !

Who wants to sport
A slender limb ?
I've every sort
Of hose for him :
Both scarlet, striped and yellow ones :
This Woodbine makes such pantaloons !

Who wants—(hush ! hush !)
A box of paint ?
'Twill give a blush,
Yet leave no taint :
This Rose with natural rouge is fill'd
From its own dewy leaves distill'd.

Then lady and gentleman fays, come buy
You never will meet such a merchant as I.

A sprig of bloom falls at his feet.

Nephon. Bow ! wow !
Floretta. What is this,
With spikes and thorns, but not a leaf on ?
Nephon. By my fay ! I think it is
A rod for Nephon.
Whe-e-e-w !
I shall be whipt, as sure as I
Stand here—Holla ! you idle Elves !
Leap, skip, hop, jump, bounce, fly,
And range yourselves,
Obedient till I lesson you
In what you have, each one, to do.
You, sir ! you, sir ! you, sir ! you !
Knight, and squire, and stout soldado,

To your charge, good men and true,
We commit this happy meadow.
From yon dingle to that dell,
See no hostile foot profane it ;
And let minute-trumpets tell
How ye steadily maintain it.
Drums strike up, and clarions bray !
Ranks i' the rear take open order !
Left foot foremost ! march away !
On by the Valley's midland border.
[*Exit, with the rest of the army.*]

GEORGE DARLEY

THE ELF-KING'S VICTORY

WHEN the Elf-King went to battle with his helmet
on his head—

Tanta-ra, rub-a-dub, rattle-rattle !

See the Elfin army marching out to battle !—

He kissed the Queen at parting, and this is what he said,
While his staff stood by respectfully, and, oh their armour
glistened,

And their eyes flashed fires of courage, and they set their
teeth and listened

To the winged words of their monarch with his helmet
on his head :—

“Now farewell,” he said, “beloved one, for you cannot
come with me,”—

Tanta-ra, rub-a-dub, rattle-rattle,

See the Elfin army marching out to battle !—

“We shall charge the foe directly, and so far as I can see,
Since we’ve got the bigger army, we shall probably defeat
them ;

We shall cut them up and smash them, and wherever we
may meet them

We shall win no end of glory, but you cannot come with
me.”

So she sighed and she released him, and his battle-cry
rang out—

Tanta-ra, rub-a-dub, rattle-rattle !

See the Elfin army marching out to battle !—

“Now St. George for merry Elf-land !” and they an-
swered with a shout,

All the cavaliers of Elf-land, mighty two-inch men of
muscle,

Who could hack their way to triumph through the thickest of the tussle,
Sitting stalwart on their chargers, while his battle-cry rang out.

In their splendid regimentals, lo, the infantry went by—
Tanta-ra, rub-a-dub, rattle-rattle !

See the Elfin army marching out to battle !
Eighty thousand lusty footmen, all prepared to do or die ;
While the handkerchiefs were waving from the windows to remind them
Of the hearts and pretty faces of the girls they left behind them,
Of the girls who cheered and chatted as the infantry went by.

So they marched to fight the Gnome King, but that wary monarch ran—

Tanta-ra, rub-a-dub, rattle-rattle !
See the Elfin army marching out to battle !
Ran with all his craven army ere the battle shock began.
And they captured all the mole-hills where his men had taken shelter,
Chased them out of their entrenchments and pursued them helter-skelter,
While the Elf King led them onward and the Gnome King cut and ran.

Then with all their banners flaunting and the Elf-King still in front—

Tanta-ra, rub-a-dub, rattle-rattle !
See the Elfin army marching back from battle !—
Home they came, the happy soldiers who had borne the dreadful brunt.

And the Lord Mayor and the Sheriffs and the City
Corporation
In their chains and robes of office gave the army an
ovation,
And were knighted very neatly by the King, who rode
in front.

R. C. LEHMANN



THE FAIRY WEDDING

MERTILLA, CLAIA, CLORIS

*A NIMPHE is married to a Fay,
Great preparations for the Day,
All Rites of Nuptials they recite you
To the Brydall and invite you.*

Mertilla. But will our Tita wed this Fay?

Claia. Yea, and to morrow is the day.

Mertilla. But why should she bestow herself
Upon this dwarfish Fayry Elfe?

Claia. Why by her smalnesse you may finde,
That she is of the Fayry kinde,
And therefore apt to chuse her make
Whence she did her beginning take ;
Besides he's deft and wondrous Ayrye,
And of the noblest of the Fayry,
Chiefe of the Crickets of much fame,
In Fayry a most ancient name.
But to be brieve, 'tis cleerely done,
The pretty wench is woo'd and wonne.

Cloris. If this be so, let us provide
The Ornaments to fit our Bryde.
For they knowing she doth come
From us in *Elizium*,
Queene Mab will looke she should be drest
In those attyres we thinke our best,
Therefore some curious things let's give her,
E'r to her Spouse we her deliver.

Mertilla. I'll have a jewell for her eare
(Which for my sake I'll have her weare)

'T shall be a Dewdrop, and therein
Of Cupids I will have a twinne,
Which struggling, with the wings shall break
The Bubble, out of which shall leak
So sweet a liquor as shall move
Each thing that smels, to be in love.

Clia. Beleeve me, Gerle, this will be fine,
And to this Pendant, then take mine ;
A Cup in fashion of a Fly,
Of the Linxes piercing eye,
Wherein there sticks a Sunny Ray,
Shot in through the cleerest day,
Whose brightnesse Venus selfe did move,
Therein to put her drinke of Love,
Which for more strength she did distill,
The Limbeck was a Phoenix quill.
At this Cup's delicious brinke,
A Fly approaching but to drinke,
Like Amber or some precious Gumme
It transparent doth become.

Cloris. For Jewels for her eares she's sped,
But for a dressing for her head
I think for her I have a Tyer,
That all Fayryes shall admyre,
The yellowes in the full-blowne Rose
Which in the top it doth inclose
Like drops of gold Oare shall be hung ;
Upon her Tresses, and among
Those scattered seeds (the eye to please)
The wings of the Cantharides :
With some o' th' Raine-bow that doth raile
Those Moons in, in the Peacock's taile :

Whose dainty colours being mixt
With th' other beauties, and so fixt,
Her lovely tresses shall appeare,
As though upon a flame they were.
And to be sure she shall be gay,
We'll take the feathers from the lay ;
About her eyes in circlets set,
To be our *Tita's* coronet.

Mertilla. Then dainty girles, I make no doubt,
But we shall neatly send her out :
But let's among ourselves agree
Of what her wedding Gowne shall be.

Claia. Of Pansie, Pincke, and Primrose leaves,
Most curiously laid on in threaves :
And all embroydery to supply,
Powthred with flowers of Rosemary :
A trayle about the skirt shalle runne,
The Silkwormes finest newly spunne ;
And every seame the Nymphs shall sew
With the smallest of the Spinners' clue :
And having done their work againe,
These to the Church shall beare her Traine :
Which for our *Tita* we will make
Of the cast slough of a Snake,
Which quivering as the winde doth blow,
The Sunne shall it like Tinsell shew.

Cloris. And being led to meet her mate,
To make sure that she want no state,
Moones from the Peacockes tayle we'll shred,
With feathers from the Pheasant's head :
Mix'd with the plume of (so high price,)
The precious bird of Paradise.

Which to make up, our Nimphes shall ply
In to a curious Canopy,
Borne o'er her head (by our enquiry)
By Elves, the fittest of the Faëry.

Mertilla. But all this while we have forgot
Her Buskins, neighbours, have we not ?

Claia. We had, for those I'll fit her now,
They shall be of the Lady-Cow :
The dainty shell upon her backe,
Which as she holds a stately pace,
Her leg will wonderfully grace.

Cloris. But then for musicke of the best,
This must be thought on for the Feast.

Mertilla. The Nightingale of birds most choyce,
To doe her best shall straine her voyce ;
And to this bird to make a set
The Mausis, Merle, and Robinet ;
The Larke, the Lennet, and the Thrush,
That make a Quier of every bush.
But for still musicke, we will keepe
The Wren and Titmouse, which to sleepe
Shall sing the Bride, when shee's alone
The rest into their chambers gone.
And like those upon Ropes that walke
On Gossamer, from staulke to staulke,
The tripping Fayry tricks shall play,
The evening of the wedding day.

Claia. But for the Bride-bed, what were fit
That hath not beene talk'd of yet ?

Cloris. Of leaves of roses white and red,
Shall be the covering of her bed :
The Curtaines, Valence, Tester, all,
Shall be the flower imperiall,

And for the Fringe, it all along
With azure Harebells shall be hung :
Of Lillies shall the Pillows be,
With down suft of the Butterflee.

Mertilla. Thus farre we handsomely have gone,
Now for our Prothalamion
Or Marriage Song of all the rest,
A thing that much must grace our feast.
Let us practise then to sing it,
Ere we before the assembly bring it :
We in Dialogues must doe it,
Then my dainty Girles set to it.

Claia. This day must Tita married be,
Come Nimphs this nuptiall let us see.

Cloris. Sprinckle the dainty flowers with dewes,
Such as the Gods at Banquets use :
Let Hearbs and Weeds turne all to Roses,
And make proud the posts with posies.
Shute your sweets into the ayre
Charge the morning to be fayre.

Claia. } For our Tita is this day,

Mertilla. } To be married to a Faye.

Claia. By whom then shall our Bride be led
To the Temple to be wed ?

Mertilla. Onely by your selfe and I,
Who that roomth should else supply ?

Cloris. Come, bright Girles, come altogether.
And bring all your off'rings hither ;
Ye most brave and Buxome Beuye,
All your goodly graces Leuye.
Come in maiestie and state
Our Brydall here to celebrate.

Mertilla. } *For us Tita is this day,*
Claia. } *Married to a noble Faye.*
Claia. *Whose lot wilt be the way to strow*
On which to Church our Bride must goe ?
Mertilla. *That I think as fit'st of all,*
To lively Lelipa will fall.
Cloris. *Summon all the sweets that are*
To this nuptiall to repayre ;
Till with their throngs themselves they smother,
Strongly styffing one another ;
And at last they all consume,
And vanish in one rich perfume.
Mertilla. } *For our Tita is this day,*
Claia. } *Married to a noble Faye.*
Mertilla. *By whom must Tita married be*
'Tis fit we all to that should see.
Claia. *The Priest he purposely doth come,*
Th' Arch Flamyne of Elizium.
Cloris. *With Tapers let the Temples shine,*
Sing to Himen, Hymnes divine :
Load the Altars till there rise
Clouds from the burnt sacrifice ;
With your Sensors fling aloofe
Their smels, till they ascend the Roofe.
Mertilla. } *For our Tita is this day,*
Claia. } *Married to a noble Fay.*
Mertilla. *But comming hacke when she is wed,*
Who breakes the Cake above her head ?
Claia. *That shall Mertilla, for she's tallest,*
And our Tita is the smallest.
Cloris. *Violins, strike up aloud,*
Ply the Gitterne, scrowre the Crowd,

Let the nimble band belabour
The whistling Pipe, and drumbling Taber :
To the full the Bagpipe racke,
Till the swelling leather cracke.

Mertilla. } For our Tita is this day,

Claia. } Married to a noble Fay.

Claia. But when to dyne she takes her seate
What shall be our Tita's meate ?

Mertilla. The Gods this Feast, as to begin,
Have sent of their Ambrosia in.

Cloris. Then serve we up the strawes rich berry,
The Respas, and Elizian Cherry :
The virgin honey from the flowers
In Hibla, wrought in Flora's bowers
Full Bowles of nectar, and no Girle
Carouse but in dissolved Pearle.

Mertilla. } For our Tita is this day,

Claia. } Married to a noble Fay.

Claia. But when night comes and she must goe
To Bed, dear Nymphes, what must we doe ?

Mertilla. In Posset must be brought,
And Poynts be from the Bridegroome caught.

Cloris. In Maskes, in Dances, and delight,
And reare Banquets spend the night :

Then about the roome we ramble,
Scatter nuts, and for them scramble.

Over Stooles, and Tables tumble,
Never thinke of noyse nor rumble.

Mertilla. } For our Tita is this day,

Claia. } Married to a noble Fay.

MICHAEL DRAYTON

A FAIRY FUNERAL

I

BEAR her along
Keep ye your song
Tender and sweet and low ;
Fairies must die !
Ask ye not why,
Ye that have hurt her so.

*Passing away—flower from the spray ! colour and light
from the leaf !
Soon, soon will the year shed its bloom on her bier, and the dust
of its dreams on our grief.*

II

Men upon earth
Bring us to birth
Gently at even and morn !
When as brother and brother
They greet one another
And smile—then a fairy is born !

But at each cruel word
Upon earth that is heard,
Each deed of unkindness or hate,
Some fairy must pass
From the games in the grass
And steal thro' the terrible Gate.

*Passing away—flower from the spray ! colour and light from
the leaf !
Soon, soon will the year shed its bloom on her bier and the
dust of its dreams on our grief.*

III

If ye knew, if ye knew
 All the wrong that ye do
 By the thought that ye harbour alone,
 How the face of some fairy
 Grows wistful and weary
 And the heart in her cold as a stone !

Ah, she was born
 Blithe as the morn
 Under an April sky
 Born of the greeting
 Of two lovers meeting !
 They parted and so she must die !

*Passing away—flower from the spray ! colour and light from
 leaf !
 Soon, soon will the year shed its bloom on her bier and the
 dust of its dreams on our grief.*

IV

Cradled in blisses,
 Yea, born of your kisses
 Oh, ye lovers that met by the moon,
 She would not have cried
 In the darkness and died
 If ye had not forgotten so soon.

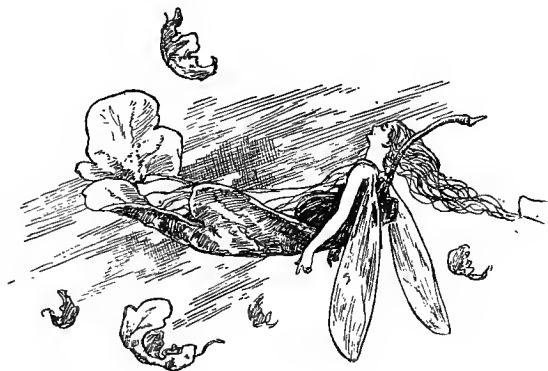
Cruel mortals, they say,
 Live for ever and aye,
 And they pray in the dark on their knees !

But the flowers that are fled
And the loves that are dead,
What heaven takes pity on these ?

*Bear her along—singing your song—tender and sweet and
low !
Fairies must die ! Ask ye not why—ye that have hurt her so.*

Passing away—
Flower from the spray !
Colour and light from the leaf !
Soon, soon will the year
Shed its bloom on her bier
And the dust of its dreams on our grief.

ALFRED NOYES



THE FAIRY CAMP

THE fairy camp, with tents displayed,
Squadrons and glittering files arrayed
In strict battalion o'er the plain :
Gay trumpets sound the shrill refrain ;
From field to field loud orders ring,
And couriers scour from wing to wing,
On a soft ambling jennet-fly
And girt with elfin chivalry
Who mingle in suppressed debate,
Rides forth the pigmy Autocrat.
Her ivory spear swings in its rest,
Close and succinct her martial vest
Tucked up above her snowy knee,
A miniature Penthesilee !
Her Amazonian nymphs beside
Their queen, at humble distance ride ;
Encased in golden helms their hair,
In corslets steel their bosoms fair,
With trowsered skirt loopt strait and high
Upon the limb's white luxury,
That clasps so firm, yet soft, each steed
Thinks himself manfully bestrid,
And snorts and paws with fierce delight,
Proud of his own young Maiden knight,
Whose moony targe at saddle bow
Hangs loose, and glimmers as they go.
Now breath your pipes and roll your drums,
'Tis the Queen's Majesty that comes !

GEORGE DARLEY

A FAIRY FAMILY

I KNEW a family
Of fairies. Thou wouldst hear their history ?
But how ? I cannot speak of them apart ;
Nay, hardly of the matter of this breath
May frame their common story. Our least word
Too palpable is grosser than the strength
Of all, as one bright water-drop contains
An animalcular people. Oberon,
Step forth, and let me fit thee with a sound
Wherein from top to toe thou wouldst not stand
Hid as an urchin in his grandsire's coat !
Their dwelling place was by the water's edge
Under a stone. The mosses of the brink
Spread ample shade with branching arms at noon,
And there each day they lay at ease, all three
Singing a drowsy chorus like the hum
Of hovering gnat above a bed at night,
Heard when the house is still. Such needful rest
Concludes the daily feast ;—a grain of grass
In no more honey-dew than loads an ant
Driven like an ass before them. Once a day
They fed at home ; but morn and eve I saw
Where in green ambush under milking kine,
Looking up, all, as to a precipice,
They watched the pail, and when the white plash fell
Cupped in some patent floweret, gathering round,
Climbed the laborious stem, and bending o'er,
Drank deep ; which done, they seek the lucid lake,
And sailing forth in pride, the emerald wing
Of summer beetle is a barge of state ;
Her cock-boat, red and black, the painted scale
Of lady-fly aft in the fairy wake

Towed by a film, and tossed perchance in storm,
When airy martlet, sipping of the pool,
Touches it to a ripple that stirs not
The lilies. Thus I knew the tiny band,
Not only so, but singly, and of each
The several favour ; yet I can but speak
With organs made to tell of gods and men.
Thou who wouldst know them better *think* the rest,
And with some fine suggestion which has taste
Of a remembered odour, silent sweet,
Or what rare power divides the last result
Of mortal touch, and to the atomy
Gives an unnamed inferior, or what sense
Responds the tremors of the soul and takes
The sound of wings that, unbeheld by eyes,
Mystic and seldom thro' its upper air
Pass as in wandering flight ; therewith behold
My vision, and therewith accept the parts
Of the so delicate whole which my strained care
Brought not unminished, nor could bring, but found
As 'twere an elfin draught in faëry cup,
And to be spilled by the mere pulse of hands
Like mine. Therewith attach each separate grace
Of those thus fair together ; know what made.
Each brother beauteous, what more subtle charm
The lovelier sister, and what golden hair
Hung over her as sometimes shimmereth light
From smallest dew-drop, else unseen, that crowns
The slimmest grass of all the shaven green
At morning. Love them by their names, for names
They had, and speech that any word of ours
Would drop between its letters uncontained ;
Love them, but hope not for impossible knowledge.

In their small language they are not as we ;
Nor could, methinks, deliver with the tongue
Our gravid notions ; nor of this our world
They speak, tho' earth-born, but have heritage
From our confines, and property in all
That thro' the net of our humanity
Floats down the stream of things. Inheriting
Below us even as we below some great
Intelligence, in whose more general eyes
Perchance mankind is one. Neither have fear
To scare them, drawing nigh, nor with thy voice
To roll their thunder. Thy wide utterance
Is silence to the ears it enters not,
Raising the attestation of a wind,
No more. As we, being men, nor hear but see
The clamour and the universal tramp
Of stars, and the continual Voice of God
Calling above our heads to all the world.

SYDNEY DOBELL

SHAKESPEARE'S FINAL RETURN TO THE AVON

AS down the bank he strolled through evening dew,
Pictures came to him of remembered eves—
Mixt with the dream our dreaming Avon weaves—
And all his faëry childhood came to view ;
He saw a child watching the birds that flew
Above a willow, through whose musky leaves
A green musk-beetle shone with mail and greaves
That shifted in the light to bronze and blue.
These dreams were born of evening's fragrance falling
From trees he loved, the scent of musk recalling,
With power beyond all power of things beholden
Or things reheard, those days when elves of dusk
Came, veiled the wings of evening, feathered golden,
And closed him in from all but willow-musk.

And then a child beneath a silver sallow—
A child who loved the swans, the moorhens' "cheep"—
Angled for bream where river holes were deep—
For gudgeon where the water glittered shallow,
Or ate the "fairy cheeses" of the mallow,
And wild fruits gathered where the wavelets creep
Round that loved church whose shadow seems to sleep
In love upon the stream and bless and hallow ;
And then a child to whom the water-fairies
Sent fish to "bite" from Avon's holes and shelves,
A child to whom, from richest honey-dairies,
The "flower-sprites" sent the bees and "sunshine elves";
Then, in the shifting vision's sweet vagaries,
He saw two lovers walking by themselves.

THEODORE WATTS-DUNTON

ON A MIDSUMMER-NIGHT

SCENE I.

A wood near Athens.

Enter a Fairy at one door, and PUCK at another.

PUCK. How now spirit ! whither wander you ?

Fai. Over hill, over dale,
Thorough bush, thorough briar,
Over park, over pale,
Thorough flood, thorough fire,

I do wander every where,
Swifter than the moon's sphere ;
And I serve the fairy queen,
To dew her orbs upon the green :
The cowslips tall her pensioners be ;
In their gold coats spots you see ;
Those be rubies, fairy favours,
In those freckles live their favours :

I must go seek some dew-drops here,
And hang a pearl in every cowslip's ear.
Farewel, thou lob of spirits, I'll be gone ;
Our queen and all her elves come here anon.

Puck. The king doth keep his revels here to night ;
Take heed, the queen come not within his sight.
For Oberon is passing fell and wrath,
Because that she, as her attendant, hath
A lovely boy, stol'n from an Indian king ;
She never had so sweet a changeling :
And jealous Oberon would have the child
Knight of his train, to trace the forests wild :
But she, perforce, withholds the loved boy,
Crowns him with flowers, and makes him all her joy :

And now they never meet in grove, or green,
By fountain clear, or spangled star-light sheen,
But they do square ; that all their elves, for fear,
Creep into acorn cups, and hide them there.

Fai. Either I mistake your shape and making quite,
Or else you are that shrewd and knavish sprite,
Call'd Robin Good-fellow : are you not he,
That fright the maidens of the villagery ;
Skim milk ; and sometimes labour in the quern ;
And bootless make the breathless housewife churn ;
And sometime make the drink to bear no barm ;
Mislead night-wanderers, laughing at their harm ?
Those that Hobgoblin call you, and sweet Puck,
You do their work, and they shall have good luck :
Are not you he ?

Puck. Thou speak'st aright ;
I am that merry wanderer of the night.
I jest to Oberon, and make him smile,
When I a fat bean-fed horse beguile,
Neighing in likeness of a silly foal :
And sometime lurk I in a gossip's bowl,
In very likeness of a roasted crab ;
And, when she drinks, against her lips I bob,
And on her wither'd dew-lap pour the ale.
The wisest aunt, telling the saddest tale,
Sometime for three-foot stool mistaketh me ;
Then slip I from her bum, down topples she,
And *tailor* cries, and falls into a cough ;
And then the whole quire hold their hips, and loffe ;
And waxen in their mirth, and neeze, and swear
A merrier hour was never wasted there.—
But room, Faery, here comes Oberon.

Fai. And here my mistress :—'Would that he were gone !

*Enter OBERON, at one door, with his train, and TITANIA
at another, with hers.*

Obe. Ill met by moon-light, proud Titania.

Tita. What, jealous Oberon ? Fairy, skip hence ;
I have forsworn his bed and company.

Obe. Tarry, rash wanton ; Am not I thy lord ?

Tita. Then I must be thy lady : But I know
When thou hast stol'n away from fairy land,
And in the shape of Corin sate all day,
Playing on pipes of corn, and versing love
To amorous Phillida. Why art thou here,
Come from the farthest steep of India ?
But that, forsooth, the bouncing Amazon,
Your buskin'd mistress, and your warrior love,
To Theseus must be wedded ; and you come
To give their bed joy and prosperity.

Ob. How canst thou thus, for shame, Titania,
Glance at my credit with Hippolita,
Knowing I know thy love to Theseus ?
Didst thou not lead him through the glimmering night
From Perigenia, whom he ravished ?
And make him with fair Ægle break his faith,
With Ariadne, and Antiopa ?

Tita. These are the forgeries of jealousy :
And never, since the middle summer's spring
Met we on hill, in dale, forest, or mead,
By paved fountain, or by rushy brook,
Or on the beached margent of the sea,
To dance our ringlets to the whistling wind,
But with thy brawls thou hast disturb'd our sport.
Therefore the winds, piping to us in vain,
As in revenge have suck'd up from the sea
Contagious fogs ; which falling in the land,

Have every pelting river made so proud,
That they have overborne their continents :
The ox hath therefore stretch'd his yoke in vain,
The ploughman lost his sweat ; and the green corn
Hath rotted, ere his youth attain'd a beard :
The fold stands empty in the drowned field,
And crows are fatt'd with the murrain flock ;
The nine-men's morris is fill'd up with mud ;
And the quaint mazes in the wanton green,
For lack of tread, are undistinguishable :
The human mortals want their winter here ;
No night is now with hymn or carol blest :—
Therefore the moon, the governess of floods,
Pale in her anger, washes all the air,
That rheumattick diseases do abound ;
And, thorough this distemperature, we see
The seasons alter : hoary-headed frosts
Fall in the fresh lap of the crimson rose ;
And on old Hyems' chin, and icy crown,
An odorous chaplet of sweet summer buds
Is, as in mockery, set : The spring, the summer,
The childing autumn, angry winter, change
Their wonted liveries, and the 'mazed world,
By their increase, now knows not which is which :
And this same progeny of evils comes
From our debate, from our dissension ;
We are their parents and original.

Obe. Do you amend it then ; it lies in you :
Why should Titania cross her Oberon ?
I do but beg a little changeling boy,
To be my henchman.

Tita. Set your heart at rest,
The fairy land buys not the child of me.

His mother was a vot'ress of my order :
And, in the spiced Indian air, by night,
Full often hath she gossip'd by my side ;
And sat with me on Neptune's yellow sands,
Marking the embarked traders on the flood ;
When we have laugh'd to see the sails conceive,
And grow big-bellied, with the wanton wind :
Which she, with pretty and with swimming gait,
(Following her womb then rich with my young 'squire,)
Would imitate ; and sail upon the land,
To fetch me trifles, and return again,
As from a voyage, rich with merchandize.
But she, being mortal, of that boy did die ;
And, for her sake, do I rear up her boy :
And, for her sake, I will not part with him.

Obe. How long within this wood intend you stay ?

Tita. Perchance, till after Theseus' wedding-day,
If you will patiently dance in our round,
And see our moon-light revels, go with us ;
If not, shun me, and I will spare your haunts.

Obe. Give me that boy, and I will go with thee.

Tita. Not for thy fairy kingdom.—Fairies, away :
We shall chide down-right, if I longer stay.

[*Exeunt* TITANIA, and her Train.

Obe. Well, go thy way : thou shalt not from this
grove,
Till I torment thee for this injury.—
My gentle Puck, come hither : Thou remember'st
Since once I sat upon a promontory,
And heard a mermaid, on a dolphin's back,
Uttering such dulcet and harmonious breath,
That the rude sea grew civil at her song ;

And certain stars shot madly from their spheres,
To hear the sea-maid's musick.

Puck. I remember.

Obe. That very time I saw, (but thou couldst not,) Flying between the cold moon and the earth,
Cupid all arm'd : a certain aim he took
At a fair vestal, throned by the west ;
And loos'd his love-shaft smartly from his bow,
As it should pierce a hundred thousand hearts :
But I might see young Cupid's fiery shaft
Quench'd in the chaste beams of the watery moon ;
And the imperial vot'ress passed on,
In maiden meditation, fancy-free.
Yet mark'd I where the bolt of Cupid fell :
It fell upon a little western flower,—
Before, milk-white ; now purple with loves wound—;
And maidens call it, love-in-idleness.
Fetch me that flower ; the herb I shew'd thee once ;
The juice of it, on sleeping eye-lids laid,
Will make or man or woman madly dote
Upon the next live creature that it sees.
Fetch me this herb ; and be thou here again,
Ere the leviathan can swim a league.

Puck. I'll put a girdle round about the earth
In forty minutes.

[*Exit.*

Obe. Having once this juice,
I'll watch Titania when she is asleep,
And drop the liquor of it in her eyes :
The next thing then she waking looks upon,
Be it on lion, bear, or wolf, or bull,
On meddling monkey, or on busy ape,)
She shall pursue it with the soul of love.
And ere I take this charm off from her sight,

(As I can take it with another herb,)
I'll make her render up her page to me.
But who comes here ? I am invisible ;
And I will over-hear their conference.

SCENE II.

Another part of the wood.

Enter TITANIA with her train.

Tita. Come, now a roundel and a fairy song ;
Then, for the third part of a minute, hence ;
Some to kill cankers in the musk-rose buds,
Some war with rere-mice for their leathern wings
To make my small elves coats, and some keep back
The clamorous owl that nightly hoots and wonders
At our quaint spirits. Sing me now asleep ;
Then to your offices and let me rest.

The Fairies sing.

You spotted snakes with double tongue,
Thorny hedgehogs, be not seen ;
Newts and blindworms, do no wrong,
Come not near our fairy queen.
Philomel, with melody
Sing in our sweet lullaby ;
Lulla, lulla, lullaby, lulla, lulla, lullaby :
Never harm,
Nor spell nor charm,
Come our lovely lady nigh ;
So, good night, with lullaby.

Weaving spiders, come not here ;
Hence, you long-legg'd spinners hence !
Beetles black approach not near ;
Worm nor snail, do no offence.
Philomel, with melody, etc.
A Fairy. Hence, away ! now all is well :
One aloof stand sentinel.
[*Exeunt Fairies.* TITANIA sleeps.]

Enter OBERON, and squeezes the flower on TITANIA'S eyelids.

Oberon. What thou seest when thou dost wake
Do it for thy true love take,
Love and languish for his sake :
Be it ounce, or cat or bear,
Pard or boar with bristled hair,
In thy eye that shall appear
When thou wakest, it is thy dear ;
Wake when some vile thing is near. [*Exit.*]

SCENE III.

The same. The Queen of Fairies lying asleep.

Enter QUINCE, SNUG, BOTTOM, FLUTE, SNOUT, and STARVELING.

Bot. Are we all met ?

Quin. Pat, pat ; and here's a marvellous convenient place for our rehearsal : This green plot shall be our stage, this hawthorn brake our tyring house ; and we will do it in action, as we will do it before the duke.

Bot. Peter Quince,—

Quin. What say'st thou, bully Bottom?

Bot. There are things in this comedy of *Pyramas and Thisby*, that will never please. First, Pyramus must draw a sword to kill himself; which the ladies cannot abide. How answer you that?

Snout. By'r'lakin, a parlous fear.

Star. I believe, we must leave the killing out, when all is done.

Bot. Not a whit; I have a device to make all well. Write me a prologue: and let the prologue seem to say, we will do no harm with our swords: and that Pyramus is not kill'd indeed: and, for the more better assurance, tell them, that I, Pyramus, am not Pyramus, but Bottom the weaver: This will put them out of fear.

Quin. Well, we will have such a prologue; and it shall be written in eight and six.

Bot. No, make it two more; let it be written in eight and eight.

Snout. Will not the ladies be afeard of the lion?

Star. I fear it, I promise you.

Bot. Masters, you ought to consider with yourselves: to bring in, God shield us! a lion among ladies, is a most dreadful thing: for there is not a more fearful wild-fowl, than your lion, living; and we ought to look to it.

Snout. Therefore, another prologue must tell, he is not a lion.

Bot. Nay, you must name his name, and half his face must be seen through the lion's neck; and he himself must speak through, saying thus, or to the same defect—Ladies, or fair ladies, I would wish you, or, I would request you, or, I would entreat you, not to fear, not to

tremble : my life for yours. If you think I come hither as a lion, it were pity of my life: No, I am no such thing ; I am a man as other men are :—and there, indeed, let him name his name ; and tell them plainly, he is Snug the joiner.

Quin. Well, it shall be so. But there is two hard things ; that is, to bring the moon-light into a chamber : for you know, Pyramus and Thisby meet by moon-light.

Snug. Doth the moon shine that night we play our play ?

Bot. A calendar, a calendar ! look in the almanack ; find out moon-shine, find out moon-shine.

Quin. Yes, it doth shine that night.

Bot. Why, then you may leave a casement of the great chamber window, where we play, open ; and the moon may shine in at the casement.

Quin. Ay ; or else one must come with a bush of thorns and a lanthorn, and say, he comes to disfigure, or to present, the person of moon-shine. Then, there is another thing : we must have a wall, in the great chamber ; for Pyramus and Thisby, says the story, did talk through the chink of a wall.

Snug. You can never bring in a wall.—What say you, Bottom ?

Bot. Some man or other must present wall ; and let him have some plaister, or some lome, or some rough cast about him, to signify wall ; or let him hold his fingers thus, and through that cranny shall Pyramus and Thisby whisper.

Quin. If that may be, then all is well. Come, sit down, every mother's son, and rehearse your parts. Pyramus, you begin : when you have spoken your speech,

enter into that brake ; and so every one according to his cue.

Enter PUCK behind.

Puck. What hempen home-spuns have we swaggering here,
So near the cradle of the fairy queen ?
What, a play toward ? I'll be an auditor ;
An actor too, perhaps, if I see cause.

Quin. Speak, Pyramus :—*Thisby*, stand forth.

Pyr. *Thisby*, the flowers of odious favours sweet,—

Quin. Odours, odours.

Pyr. ———odours favours sweet,—

So hath thy breath, my dearest *Thisby* dear.—

But, hark, a voice ! stay thou but here a while,

And by and by I will to thee appear. [*Exit.*

Puck. A stranger Pyramus than e'er play'd here !

[*aside.*—*Exit*

This. Must I speak now ?

Quin. Ay, marry, must you : for you must understand, he goes but to see a noise that he heard, and is to come again.

This. Most radiant Pyramus, most lily-white of hue,

Of colour like the red rose on triumphant brier,

Most brisky juvenal, and eke most lovely Jew,

As true as truest horse, that yet would never tire,

I'll meet thee, Pyramus, at *Ninny's* tomb.

Quin. *Ninus's* tomb, man : Why you must not speak that yet ; that you answer to Pyramus : you speak all your part at once, cues and all.—Pyramus enter ; your cue is past ; it is, *never tire.*

Re-enter PUCK, and BOTTOM *with an ass's head.*

This. O,—*As true as truest horse that yet would never tire.*

Pyr. *If I were fair, Thisby, I were only thine :—*

Quin. O monstrous ! O strange ! we are haunted.
Pray masters ! fly, masters ! help ! [*Exeunt Clowns.*]

Puck. I'll follow you, I'll lead you about a round,
Through bog, through bush, through brake, through
brier,

Sometime a horse I'll be, sometime a hound,

A hog, a headless bear, sometime a fire ;

And neigh, and bark, and grunt, and roar and burn :

Like horse, hound, hog, bear, fire, at every turn. [*Exit.*]

Bot. Why do they run away ? this is a knavery of
them, to make me afraid.

Re-enter SNOUT.

Snout. O Bottom, thou art changed ! what do I see
on thee ?

Bot. What do you see ? you see an ass' head of your
own ; Do you ?

Re-enter QUINCE.

Quin. Bless thee, Bottom ! bless thee ! thou art
translated. [*Exit.*]

Bot. I see their knavery : this is to make an ass of
me ; to fright me, if they could. But I will not stir
from this place, do what they can : I will walk up and
down here, and I will sing, that they shall hear I am not
afraid. [*sings.*]

*The ousel-cock, so black of hue,
With orange-tawny bill,
The throstle with his note so true,
The wren with little quill*

Tita. What angel wakes me from my flowery bed ?
[waking]

Bot. *The finch, the sparrow, and the lark,
The plain-song cuckoo gray,
Whose note full many a man doth mark,
And dares not answer, nay ;—*

for indeed, who would set his wit to so foolish a bird ?
who would give a bird the lie, though he cry, *cuckoo*,
never so.

Tita. I pray thee, gentle mortal, sing again :
Mine ear is much enamour'd of thy note,
So is mine eye enthralled to thy shape ;
And thy fair virtue's force perforce doth move me,
On the first view, to say, to swear, I love thee.

Bot. Methinks, mistress, you should have little reason
for that : And yet to say the truth, reason and love keep
little company together now-a-days ; The more the pity,
that some honest neighbours will not make them friends.
Nay, I can glee, upon occasion.

Tita. Thou art as wise as thou art beautiful.

Bot. Not so, neither : but if I had wit enough to get
out of this wood, I have enough to serve mine own
turn.

Tita. Out of this wood do not desire to go ;
Thou shalt remain here whether thou wilt or no.
I am a spirit, of no common rate ;
The summer still doth tend upon my state,
And I do love thee : therefore, go with me ;
I'll give thee fairies to attend on thee ;
And they shall fetch thee jewels from the deep,
And sing, while thou on pressed flowers dost sleep :
And I will purge thy mortal grossness so,

That thou shalt like an airy spirit go.—
Pease-blossom ! Cobweb ! Moth ! and Mustard-seed !

Enter four Fairies.

1. *Fair.* Ready.

2. *Fair.* And I.

3. *Fair.* And I.

4. *Fair.* And I.

All. Where shall we go ?

Tita. Be kind and courteous to this gentleman ;
Hop in his walks, and gambol in his eyes ;
Feed him with apricocks, and dewberries,
With purple grapes, green figs, and mulberries ;
The honey-bags steal from the humble-bees,
And, for night tapers, crop their waxen thighs
And light them at the fiery glow-worm's eyes,
To have my love to bed, and to arise ;
And pluck the wings from painted butterflies,
To fan the moon-beams from his sleeping eyes :
Nod to him, elves, and do him courtesies.

1. *Fai.* Hail, mortal !

2. *Fai.* Hail !

3. *Fai.* Hail !

4. *Fai.* Hail !

Bot. I cry your worships mercy, heartily.—I beseech,
your worship's name ?

Cob. Cobweb.

Bot. I shall desire you of more acquaintance, good
master Cobweb : If I cut my finger, I shall make bold
with you.—Your name, honest gentleman ?

Pease. Pease-blossom.

Bot. I pray you, commend me to mistress Squash,
your mother, and to master Peascod, your father. Good

master Pease-blossom, I shall desire you of more acquaintance too.—Your name, I beseech you, sir ?

Mus. Mustard-seed.

Bot. Good master Mustard-seed, I know your patience well : that same cowardly, giant-like, ox-beef hath devoured many a gentleman of your house : I promise you your kindred hath made my eyes water ere now. I desire you, more acquaintance, good master Mustard-seed.

Tita. Come, wait upon him ; lead him to my bower.

The moon, methinks, looks with a watery eye ;
And when she weeps, weeps every little flower,
Lamenting some enforced chastity.

Tie up my love's tongue, bring him silently. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV.

Another part of the Wood.

Enter OBERON.

Obe. I wonder, if Titania be awak'd ;
Then, what it was that next came in her eye,
Which she must dote on in extremity.

Enter PUCK.

Here comes my messenger.—How now, mad spirit ?
What night-rule now about this haunted grove ?

Puck. My mistress with a monster is in love.
Near to her close and consecrated bower,
While she was in her dull and sleeping hour,
A crew of patches, rude mechanicals,
That work for bread upon Athenian stalls,

Were met together to rehearse a play,
Intended for great Theseus' nuptial day.
The shallowest thick-skin of that barren sort,
Who Pyramus presented, in their sport
Forsook his scene, and enter'd in a brake :
When I did him at this advantage take,
An ass's nowl I fixed on his head ;
Anon, his Thisbe must be answered,
And forth my mimick comes : When they him spy,
As wild geese that the creeping fowler eye,
Or russet-pated choughs, many in sort,
Rising and cawing at the gun's report.
Sever themselves and madly sweep the sky,
So, at his sight, away his fellows fly.

Obe. I'll to my queen and beg her Indian boy ;
And then I will her charmed eye release
From monster's view, and all things shall be peace.

Puck. My fairy lord, this must be done with haste,
For night's swift dragons cut the clouds full fast,
And yonder shines Aurora's harbinger ;
At whose approach, ghosts, wandering here and there,
Troop home to churchyards : damned spirits all,
That in cross-ways and floods have burial,
Already to their wormy beds are gone,
For fear lest day should look their shames upon,
They wilfully themselves exile from light,
And must for aye consort with black-brow'd night.

Obe. But we are spirits of another sort :
I with the morning's love have oft made sport,
And, like a forester, the groves may tread,
Even till the eastern gate, all fiery red,
Opening on Neptune with fair blessed beams,
Turns into yellow gold his salt green streams.

But, notwithstanding, haste ; make no delay :
We may effect this business yet ere day.

[*Exit.*

Puck. Up and down, up and down,
I will lead them up and down :
I am feared in field and town :
Goblin, lead them up and down .

SCENE V.

Another Part of the Wood.

Enter TITANIA, and BOTTOM, Fairies attending ;
OBERON *behind, unseen.*

Tita. Come sit thee down upon this flowery bed,
While I thy amiable cheeks do coy,
And stick musk-roses in thy sleek smooth head,
And kiss thy fair large ears, my gentle joy.

Bot. Where's Pease-blossom ?

Pease. Ready.

Bot. Scratch my head, Pease-blossom.—Where's Monsieur Cobweb ?

Cob. Ready.

Bot. Monsieur Cobweb ; good monsieur, get your weapons in your hand, and kill me a red-hip'd humble-bee on the top of a thistle ; and, good monsieur, bring me the honey-bag. Do not fret yourself too much in the action, monsieur ; and, good monsieur, have a care the honey-bag break not ; I would be loth to have you over-flown with a honey-bag, signior.—Where's Monsieur Mustard-seed ?

Must. Ready.

Bot. Give me your neif, Monsieur Mustard-seed.
Pray you, leave your courtesy, good monsieur.

Must. What's your will?

Bot. Nothing, good monsieur, but to help cavalero Cobweb to scratch. I must to the barber's, monsieur; for, methinks, I am marvellous hairy about the face: and I am such a tender ass, if my hair do but tickle me, I must scratch.

Tita. What, wilt thou hear some musick, my sweet love?

Bot. I have a reasonable good ear in musick: let us have the tongs and the bones.

Tita. Or, say, sweet love, what thou desir'st to eat.

Bot. Truly, a peck of provender; I could munch your good dry oats. Methinks I have a great desire to a bottle of hay: good hay, sweet hay, hath no fellow.

Tita. I have a venturous fairy that shall seek
The squirrel's hoard, and fetch thee new nuts.

Bot. I had rather have a handful, or two, of dried pease. But, I pray you, let none of your people stir me; I have an exposition of sleep come upon me.

Tita. Sleep thou, and I will wind thee in my arms.

Fairies, be gone, and be all ways away.

So doth the woodbine, the sweet honey-suckle,

Gently entwist,—the female ivy so

Enrings, the barky fingers of the elm.

O, how I love thee! how I dote on thee! [*They sleep.*]

OBERON advances. Enter PUCK.

Obe. Welcome, good Robin. See'st thou this sweet sight?

Her dotage now I do begin to pity.

For meeting her of late, behind the wood,

Seeking sweet savours for this hateful fool,
I did upbraid her, and fall out with her :
For she his hairy temples then had rounded
With coronet of fresh and fragrant flowers ;
And that same dew, which sometime on the buds
Was wont to swell, like round and orient pearls,
Stood now within the pretty flouret's eyes,
Like tears, that did their own disgrace bewail.
When I had, at my pleasure, taunted her,
And she, in mild terms, begg'd my patience,
I then did ask of her her changeling child ;
Which straight she gave me, and her fairy sent
To bear him to my bower in fairy land.
And now I have the boy, I will undo
This hateful imperfection of her eyes.
And, gentle Puck, take this transformed scalp
From off the head of this Athenian swain ;
That he awaking when the others do,
May all to Athens back again repair ;
And think no more of this night's accidents,
But as the fierce vexation of a dream.
But first I will release the fairy queen.

Be, as thou wast wont to be ;

[touching her eyes with an herb.]

See, as thou was wont to see :

Dian's bud o'er Cupid's flower,

Hath such force and blessed power.

Now, my Titania ; wake you, my sweet queen.

Tita. My Oberon ! what visions have I seen !

Methought, I was enamour'd of an ass.

Obe. There lies your love.

Tita. How came these things to pass ?

O, how mine eyes do loath his visage now ?

Obe. Silence, a while.—Robin, take off this head.—
Titania, musick call ; and strike more dead
Than common sleep, of all these five the sense.

Tita. Musick, ho ! musick ; such as charmeth sleep.

Puck. Now, when thou wak'st, with thine own fool's
eyes peep.

Obe. Sound, musick. [*Still Musick.*] Come my queen,
take hands with me,

And rock the ground whereon these sleepers be.

Now thou and I are new in amity ;

And will, to-morrow midnight, solemnly,

Dance in duke Theseus' house triumphantly,

And bless it to all fair prosperity :

There shall the pairs of faithful lovers be

Wedded, with Theseus, all in jollity.

Puck. Fairy king, attend and mark ;

I do hear the morning lark.

Obe. Then, my queen, in silence sad,

Trip we after the night's shade :

We the globe can compass soon,

Swifter than the wand'ring moon.

Tita. Come, my lord ; and in our flight,

Tell me how it came this night,

That I sleeping here was found,

With these mortals, on the ground.

[*Exeunt.*]

THE PLEA OF THE MIDSUMMER FAIRIES

TO CHARLES LAMB, ESQ.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—I thank my literary fortune that I am not reduced, like many better wits, to barter dedications, for the hope or promise of patronage, with some nominally great man ; but that where true affection points, and honest respect, I am free to gratify my head and heart by a sincere inscription. An intimacy and dearness, worthy of a much earlier date than our acquaintance can refer to, direct me at once to your name : and with this acknowledgment of your ever kind feeling towards me, I desire to record a respect and admiration for you as a writer, which no one acquainted with our literature, save Elia himself, will think disproportionate or misplaced. If I had not these better reasons to govern me, I should be guided to the same selection by your intense yet critical relish for the works of our great Dramatist, and for that favourite play in particular which has furnished the subject of my verses.

It is my design, in the following poem, to celebrate, by an allegory, that immortality which Shakspeare has conferred on the fairy mythology by his "Midsummer Night's Dream." But for him, those pretty children of our childhood would leave barely their names to our maturer years ; they belong, as the mites upon the plum, to the bloom of fancy, a thing generally too frail and beautiful to withstand the rude handling of time : but the Poet has made this most perishable part of the mind's creation equal to the most enduring ; he has so intertwined the elfins with human sympathies, and linked them by so many delightful associations with the productions of nature, that they are as real to the mind's eye as their green magical circles to the outer sense.

It would have been a pity for such a race to go extinct, even though they were but as the butterflies that hover about the leaves and blossoms of the visible world.

I am, my dear Friend, yours most truly.

T. Hood.

I

'Twas in that mellow season of the year,
When the hot sun singes the yellow leaves
Till they be gold,—and with a broader sphere
The Moon looks down on Ceres and her sheaves ;
When more abundantly the spider weaves,
And the cold wind breathes from a chillier clime ;
That forth I fared, on one of those still eves,
Touched with the dewy sadness of the time,
To think how the bright months had spent their prime.

II

So that, wherever I addressed my way,
I seemed to track the melancholy feet
Of him that is the Father of Decay,
And spoils at once the sour weed and the sweet ;
Wherefore regretfully I made retreat
To some unwasted regions of my brain,
Charmed with the light of summer and the heat,
And bade that bounteous season bloom again,
And sprout fresh flowers in my own domain.

III

It was a shady and sequestered scene,
Like those famed gardens of Boccaccio,
Planted with his own laurels evergreen,
And roses that for endless summer blow ;

And there were fountain springs to overflow
Their marble basins,—and cool green arcades
Of tall o'erarching sycamores, to throw
Athwart the dappled path their dancing shades,—
With timid conies cropping the green blades.

IV

And there were crystal pools, peopled with fish
Argent and gold ; and some of Tyrian skin,
Some crimson-barred ;—and ever at a wish
They rose obsequious till the wave grew thin
As glass upon their backs, and then dived in,
Quenching their ardent scales in watery gloom ;
Whilst others with fresh hues rowed forth to win
My changeable regard, for so we doom
Things born of thought to vanish or to bloom.

V

And there were many birds of many dyes,
From tree to tree still faring to and fro,
And stately peacocks with their splendid eyes,
And gorgeous pheasants with their golden glow,
Like Iris just bedabbled in her bow,
Besides some vocalists, without a name,
That oft on fairy errands come and go,
With accents magical ;—and all were tame,
And peckled at my hand where'er I came.

VI

And for my sylvan company, in lieu
Of Pampinea with her lively peers,
Sat Queen Titania with her pretty crew,

All in their liveries quaint, with elfin gears,
For she was gracious to my childish years,
" And made me free of her enchanted round ;
Wherefore this dreamy scene she still endears,
And plants her court upon a verdant mound,
Fenced with umbrageous woods and groves profound.

VII

" Ah me," she cries, " was ever moonlight seen
So clear and tender for our midnight trips ?
Go some one forth, and with a trump convene
My lieges all ! "—Away the goblin skips
A pace or two apart, and deftly strips
The ruddy skin from a sweet rose's cheek,
Then blows the shuddering leaf between his lips,
Making it utter forth a shrill small shriek,
Like a frayed bird in the grey owlet's beak.

VIII

And lo ! upon my fixed delighted ken
Appeared the loyal Fays.—Some by degrees
Crept from the primrose buds that opened then,
And some from bell-shaped blossoms like the bees,
Some from the dewy meads, and rushy leas,
Flew up like chafers when the rustics pass ;
Some from the rivers, others from tall trees
Dropped, like shed blossoms, silent to the grass,
Spirits and elfins small of every class.

IX

Peri and Pixy, and quaint Puck the Antic,
Brought Robin Goodfellow, that merry swain ;

And stealthy Mab, queen of old realms romantic,
Came too, from distance, in her tiny wain,
Fresh dripping from a cloud—some bloomy rain,
Then circling the bright Moon, had washed her car,
And still bedewed it with a various stain :
Lastly came Ariel, shooting from a star,
Who bears all fairy embassies afar.

x

But Oberon, that night elsewhere exiled,
Was absent, whether some distempered spleen
Kept him and his fair mate unreconciled,
Or warfare with the Gnome (whose race had been
Sometime obnoxious) kept him from his queen,
And made her now peruse the starry skies
Prophetical with such an absent mien ;
Howbeit, the tears stole often to her eyes,
And oft the Moon was incensed with her sighs—

xI

Which made the elves sport drearily, and soon
Their hushing dances languished to a stand,
Like midnight leaves when, as the Zephyrs swoon,
All on their drooping stems they sink unfauined—
So into silence drooped the fairy band,
To see their empress dear so pale and still,
Crowding her softly round on either hand,
As pale as frosty snowdrops, and as chill,
To whom the sceptred dame reveals her ill.

XII

“Alas,” quoth she, “ye know our fairy lives
 Are leased upon the fickle faith of men ;
 Not measured out against fate’s mortal knives,
 Like human gossamers, we perish when
 We fade, and are forgot in worldly ken,—
 Though poesy has thus prolonged our date,
 Thanks be to the sweet Bard’s auspicious pen
 That rescued us so long !—howbeit of late
 I feel some dark misgivings of our fate.

XIII

“And this dull day my melancholy sleep
 Hath been so thronged with images of woe,
 That even now I cannot choose but weep
 To think this was some sad prophetic show
 Of future horror to befall us so,—
 Of mortal wreck and uttermost distress,—
 Yea, our poor empire’s fall and overthrow,—
 For this was my long vision’s dreadful stress,
 And when I waked my trouble was not less.

XIV

“Whenever to the clouds I tried to seek,
 Such leaden weight dragged these Icarian wings,
 My faithless wand was wavering and weak,
 And slimy toads had trespassed in our rings—
 The birds refused to sing for me—all things
 Disowned their old allegiance to our spells ;
 The rude bees pricked me with their rebel stings ;
 And, when I passed, the valley-lily’s bells
 Rang out, methought, most melancholy knells.

xv

‘And ever on the faint and flagging air
A doleful spirit with a dreary note
Cried in my fearful ear, ‘Prepare ! prepare !’
Which soon I knew came from a raven’s throat,
Perched on a cypress bough not far remote,—
A cursed bird, too crafty to be shot,
That alway cometh with his soot-black coat
To make hearts dreary :—for he is a blot
Upon the book of life, as well ye wot !

xvi

“Wherefore some while I bribed him to be mute,
With bitter acorns stuffing his foul maw,
Which barely I appeased, when some fresh bruit
Startled me all ahead !—and soon I saw
The horriddest shape that ever raised my awe,—
A monstrous giant, very huge and tall,
Such as in elder times, devoid of law,
With wicked might grieved the primeval ball,
And this was sure the deadiest of them all !

xvii

“Gaunt was he as a wolf of Languedoc,
With bloody jaws, and frost upon his crown ;
So from his barren poll one hoary lock
Over his wrinkled front fell far adown,
Well nigh to where his frosty brows did frown
Like jagged icicles at cottage eaves ;
And for his coronal he wore some brown
And bristled ears gathered from Ceres’ sheaves,
Entwined with certain sere and russet leaves.

XVIII

“And lo ! upon a mast reared far aloft,
He bore a very bright and crescent blade,
The which he waved so dreadfully, and oft,
In meditative spite, that, sore dismayed,
I crept into an acorn-cup for shade ;
Meanwhile the horrid effigy went by :
I trow his look was dreadful, for it made
The trembling birds betake them to the sky,
For every leaf was lifted by his sigh.

XIX

“ And ever as he sighed, his foggy breath
Blurred out the landscape like a flight of smoke
Thence knew I this was either dreary Death
Or Time, who leads all creatures to his stroke.
Ah wretched me ! ”—Here, even as she spoke
The melancholy Shape came gliding in,
And leaned his back against an antique oak,
Folding his wings, that were so fine and thin,
They scarce were seen against the Dryad’s skin.

XX

Then what a fear seized all the little rout !
Look how a flock of panicked sheep will stare—
And huddle close—and start—and wheel about,
Watching the roaming mongrel here and there,—
So did that sudden Apparition scare
All close ahead those small affrighted things ;
Nor sought they now the safety of the air,
As if some leaden spell withheld their wings ;
But who can fly that ancientest of Kings ?

XXI

Whom now the Queen, with a forestalling tear
 And previous sigh, beginneth to entreat,
 Bidding him spare, for love, her lieges dear :
 "Alas !" quoth she, "is there no nodding wheat
 Ripe for thy crooked weapon, and more meet,—
 Or withered leaves to ravish from the tree,—
 Or crumbling battlements for thy defeat ?
 Think but what vaunting monuments there be
 Buildd in spite and mockery of thee.

XXII

"O fret away the fabric walls of Fame,
 And grind down marble Cæsars with the dust :
 Make tombs inscriptionless—raze each high name,
 And waste old armours of renown with rust :
 Do all of this, and thy revenge is just :
 Make such decays the trophies of thy prime,
 And check Ambition's overweening lust,
 That dares exterminating war with Time,—
 But we are guiltless of that lofty crime.

XXIII

"Frail feeble sprites !—the children of a dream !
 Leased on the sufferance of fickle men,
 Like motes dependent on the sunny beam,
 Living but in the sun's indulgent ken,
 And when that light withdraws, withdrawing then ;—
 So do we flutter in the glance of youth
 And fervid fancy,—and so perish when
 The eye of faith grows aged ;—in sad truth,
 Feeling thy sway, O Time ! though not thy tooth !

XXIV

Where be those old divinities forlorn,
 That dwelt in trees, or haunted in a stream ?
 Alas ! their memories are dimmed and torn,
 Like the remaining tatters of a dream :
 So will it fare with our poor thrones, I deem ;—
 For us the same dark trench Oblivion delves,
 That holds the wastes of every human scheme.
 O spare us then,—and these our pretty elves,
 We soon, alas ! shall perish of ourselves !”

XXV

Now as she ended, with a sigh, to name
 Those old Olympians, scattered by the whirl
 Of fortune's giddy wheel and brought to shame
 Methought a scornful and malignant curl
 Showed on the lips of that malicious churl,
 To think what noble havocs he had made ;
 So that I feared he all at once would hurl
 The harmless fairies into endless shade,—
 Howbeit he stopped awhile to whet his blade.

XXVI

Pity it was to hear the elfins' wail,
 Rise up in concert from their mingled dread ;
 Pity it was to see them, all so pale,
 Gaze on the grass as for a dying bed ;
 But Puck was seated on a spider's thread,
 That hung between two branches of a briar,
 And 'gan to swing and gambol heels o'er head,
 Like any Southwark tumbler on a wire,
 For him no present grief could long inspire.

100

XXVII

Meanwhile the Queen with many piteous drops,
 Falling like tiny sparks full fast and free,
 Bedews a pathway from her throne ; and stops
 Before the foot of her arch enemy,
 And with her little arms enfolds his knee,
 That shows more grisly from that fair embrace ;
 But she will ne'er depart. " Alas ! " quoth she,
 " My painful fingers I will here enlase
 Till I have gained your pity for our race.

XXVIII

" What have we ever done to earn this grudge,
 And hate—(if not too humble for thy hating ?)—
 Look o'er our labours and our lives, and judge
 If there be any ills of our creating :
 For we are very kindly creatures, dating
 With nature's charities still sweet and bland :
 O think this murder worthy of debating ! "
 Herewith she makes a signal with her hand,
 To beckon some one from the Fairy band.

XXIX

Anon I saw one of those elfin things
 Clad all in white like any chorister,
 Come fluttering forth on his melodious wings
 That made soft music at each little stir,
 But something louder than a bee's demur
 Before he alights upon a bunch of broom,
 And thus 'gan he with Saturn to confer,—
 And O his voice was sweet, touched with the gloom
 Of that sad theme that argued of his doom !

xxx

Quoth he : " We make all melodies our care,
That no false discords may offend the Sun,
Music's great master—tuning everywhere
All pastoral sounds and melodies, each one
Duly to place and season, so that none
May harshly interfere. We rouse at morn
The shrill sweet lark ; and when the day is done,
Hush silent pauses for the bird forlorn,
That singeth with her breast against a thorn.

xxxI

" We gather in loud choirs the twittering race,
That make a chorus with their single note ;
And tend on new-fledged birds in every place
That duly they may get their tunes by rote ;
And oft, like echoes, answering remote,
We hide in thickets from the feathered throng,
And strain in rivalry each throbbing throat,
Singing in shrill responses all day long,
Whilst the glad truant listens to our song.

xxxII

" Wherefore, great King of Years, as thou dost love
The raining music from a morning cloud,
When vanished larks are carolling above,
To wake Apollo with their pipings loud ;
If ever thou hast heard in leafy shroud
The sweet and plaintive Sappho of the dell,
Show thy sweet mercy on this little crowd,
And we will muffle up the sheepfold bell
Whene'er thou listenest to Philomel."

xxxiii

Then Saturn thus : " Sweet is the merry lark,
 That carols in man's ear so clear and strong ;
 And youth must love to listen in the dark
 That tuneful elegy of Tereus's wrong ;
 But I have heard that ancient strain too long,
 For sweet is sweet but when a little strange,
 And I grow weary for some newer song ;
 For wherefore had I wings, unless to range
 Through all things mutable from change to change ?

xxxiv

" But would'st thou hear the melodies of Time,
 Listen when sleep and drowsy darkness roll
 Over hushed cities, and the midnight chime
 Sounds from their hundred clocks, and deep bells toll
 Like a last knell over the dead world's soul,
 Saying, Time shall be final of all things,
 Whose late, last voice must elegize the whole,—
 O then I clap aloft my brave broad wings,
 And make the wide air tremble while it rings !"

xxxv

Then next a fair Eve-Fay made meek address,
 Saying, " We be the handmaids of the Spring,
 In sign whereof, May, the quaint broideress,
 Hath wrought her samplers on our gauzy wing.
 We tend upon bud's birth and blossoming,
 And count the leafy tributes that they owe—
 As, so much to the earth—so much to fling
 In showers to the brook—so much to go
 In whirlwinds to the clouds that made them grow.

XXXVI

“ The pastoral cowslips are our little pets,
 And daisy stars, whose firmament is green ;
 Pansies, and those veiled nuns, meek violets,
 Sighing to that warm world from which they screen ;
 And golden daffodils, plucked for May’s Queen ;
 And lonely harebells, quaking on the heath ;
 And Hyacinth, long since a fair youth seen,
 Whose tuneful voice, turned fragrance in his breath
 Kissed by sad Zephyr, guilty of his death.

XXXVII

“ The widowed primrose weeping to the moon,
 And saffron crocus in whose chalice bright
 A cool libation hoarded for the noon
 Is kept—and she that purifies the light,
 The virgin lily, faithful to her white,
 Whereon Eve wept in Eden for her shame ;
 And the most dainty rose, Aurora’s spright,
 Our very godchild, by whatever name—
 Spare us our lives, for we did nurse the same ! ”

XXXVIII

Then that old Mower stamped his heel, and struck
 His hurtful scythe against the harmless ground,
 Saying, “ Ye foolish imps, when am I stuck
 With gaudy buds, or like a wooer crowned
 With flow’ry chaplets, save when they are found
 Withered ?—Whenever have I plucked a rose,
 Except to scatter its vain leaves around ?
 For so all gloss of beauty I oppose,
 And bring decay on every flower that blows.

xxxix

“Or when am I so wroth as when I view
The wanton pride of Summer;—how she decks
The birthday world with blossoms ever new,
As if Time had not lived, and heaped great wrecks
Of years on years?—O then I bravely vex
And catch the gay months in their gaudy plight,
And slay them with the wreaths about their necks,
Like foolish heifers in the holy rite,
And raise great trophies to my ancient might.”

xl

Then saith another, “We are kindly things,
And like her offspring nestle with the dove,—
Witness these hearts embroidered on our wings
To show our constant patronage of love :—
We sit at even, in sweet bowers above
Lovers, and shake rich odours on the air,
To mingle with their sighs ; and still remove
The startling owl, and bid the bat forbear
Their privacy, and haunt some other where.

xli

“And we are near the mother when she sits
Beside her infant in its wicker bed ;
And we are in the fairy scene that flits
Across its tender brain : sweet dreams we shed,
And whilst the tender little soul is fled
Away, to sport with our young elves, the while
We touch the dimpled cheek with roses red,
And tickle the soft lips until they smile,
So that their careful parents they beguile.

XLII

“ O then, if ever thou hast breathed a vow
At Love’s dear portal, or at pale moon-rise
Crushed the dear curl on a regardful brow
That did not frown thee from thy honey prize—
If ever thy sweet son sat on thy thighs,
And wooed thee from thy careful thoughts within
To watch the harmless beauty of his eyes,
Or glad thy fingers on his smooth soft skin,
For Love’s dear sake, let us thy pity win ! ”

XLIII

Then Saturn fiercely : “ What joy have I
In tender babes, that have devoured mine own,
Whenever to the light I heard them cry,
Till foolish Rhea cheated me with stone ?
Whereon, till now, is my great hunger shown,
In monstrous dints of my enormous tooth ;
And,—but the peopled world is too full grown
For hunger’s edge—I would consume all youth
At one great meal, without delay or ruth !

XLIV

“ For I am well-nigh crazed and wild to hear
How boastful fathers taunt me with their breed,
Saying, We shall not die nor disappear,
But in these other selves ourselves succeed,
Even as ripe flowers pass into their seed
Only to be renewed from prime to prime,
All of which boastings I am forced to read,
Besides a thousand challenges to Time
Which bragging lovers have compiled in rhyme.
106

XLV

“Wherefore, when they are sweetly met o’ nights,
There will I steal, and with my hurried hand
Startle them suddenly from their delights
Before the next encounter hath been planned,
Ravishing hours in little minutes spanned ;
But when they say farewell, and grieve apart,
Then like a leaden statue I will stand,
Meanwhile their many tears encrust my dart,
And with a ragged edge cut heart from heart.”

XLVI

Then next a merry Woodsman, clad in green,
Stept vanward from his mates, that idly stood
Each at his proper ease, as they had been
Nursed in the liberty of old Shérwood,
And wore the livery of Robin Hood,
Who wont in forest shades to dine and sup,—
So came this chief right frankly, and made good
His haunch against his axe, and thus spoke up,
Doffing his cap, which was an acorn’s cup :—

XLVII

“We be small foresters and gay, who tend
On trees, and all their furniture of green,
Training the young boughs airily to bend,
And show blue snatches of the sky between ;
Or knit more close intricacies, to screen
Birds’ crafty dwellings as may hide them best,
But most the timid blackbird’s—she, that seen,
Will bear black poisonous berries to her nest,
Lest man should cage the darlings of her breast.

XLVIII

"We bend each tree in proper attitude,
And founting willows train in silvery falls ;
We frame all shady roofs and arches rude,
And verdant aisles leading to Dryads' halls,
Or deep recesses where the Echo calls ;—
We shape all plummy trees against the sky,
And carve tall elms' Corinthian capitals,—
When sometimes, as our tiny hatchets ply,
Men say the tapping woodpecker is nigh.

XLIX

"Sometimes we scoop the squirrel's hollow cell,
And sometimes carve quaint letters on trees' rind
That haply some lone musing wight may spell
Dainty Aminta,—Gentle Rosalind,—
Or chastest Laura,—sweetly called to mind
In sylvan solitudes, ere he lies down ;
And sometimes we enrich grey stems with twined
And vagrant ivy,—or rich moss, whose brown
Burns into gold as the warm sun goes down.

L

"And, lastly, for mirth's sake and Christmas cheer,
We bear the seedling berries, for increase,
To graft the Druid oaks, from year to year,
Careful that mistletoe may never cease ;
Wherefore, if thou dost prize the shady peace
Of sombre forests, or to see light break
Through sylvan cloisters, and in spring release
Thy spirit amongst leaves from careful ake,
Spare us our lives for the Green Dryad's sake."

LI

Then Saturn, with a frown : " Go forth, and fell
Oak for your coffins, and thenceforth lay by
Your axes for the rust, and bid farewell
To all sweet birds, and the blue peeps of sky
Through tangled branches, for ye shall not spy
The next green generation of the tree ;
But hence with the dead leaves, whene'er they fly,—
Which in the bleak air I would rather see,
Than flights of the most tuneful birds that be.

LII

" For I dislike all prime and verdant pets,
Ivy except, that on the aged wall
Preys with its worm-like roots, and daily frets
The crumbled tower it seems to league withal,
King-like, worn down by its own coronal :
Neither in forest haunts love I to won,
Before the golden plumage 'gins to fall,
And leaves the brown bleak limbs with few leaves on,
Or bare—like Nature in her skeleton.

LIII

" For then sit I amongst the crooked boughs,
Wooing dull Memory with kindred sighs ;
And there in rustling nuptials we espouse,
Smit by the sadness in each other's eyes ;
But Hope must have green bowers and blue skies,
And must be courted with the gauds of spring ;
Whilst Youth leans god-like on her lap, and cries,
What shall we always do, but love and sing ?—
And Time is reckoned a discarded thing."

LIV

Here in my dream it made me fret to see
 How Puck, the antic, all this dreary while
 Had blithely jested with calamity,
 With mistimed mirth mocking the doleful style
 Of his sad comrades till it raised my bile
 To see him so reflect their grief aside,
 Turning their solemn looks to half a smile—
 Like a straight stick shown crooked in the tide ;
 But soon a novel advocate I spied.

LV

Quoth he : “ We’ll teach all natures to fulfil
 Their fore-appointed crafts, and instincts meet,—
 The bee’s sweet alchemy,—the spider’s skill,—
 The pismire’s care to garner up his wheat,—
 And rustic masonry to swallows fleet,—
 The lapwing’s cunning to preserve her nest,—
 But most, that lesser pelican, the sweet
 And shrilly ruddock, with its bleeding breast,
 Its tender pity of poor babes distrest.

LVI

“ Sometimes we cast our shapes, and in sleek skins
 Delve with the timid mole, that aptly delves
 From our example ; so the spider spins,
 And eke the silkworm, patterned by ourselves :
 Sometimes we travail on the summer shelves
 Of early bees, and busy toils commence,
 Watched of wise men, that know not we are elves,
 But gaze and marvel at our stretch of sense,
 And praise our human-like intelligence.

LVII

“Wherefore, by thy delight in that old tale,
And plaintive dirges the late robins sing,
What time the leaves are scattered by the gale,
Mindful of that old forest burying ;
As thou dost love to watch each tiny thing,
For whom our craft most curiously contrives,
If thou hast caught a bee upon the wing,
To take his honey-bag,—spare us our lives,
And we will pay the ransom in full hives.”

LVIII

“Now by my glass,” quoth Time, “ye do offend
In teaching the brown bees that careful lore,
And frugal ants, whose millions would have end,
But they lay up for need a timely store,
And travail with the seasons evermore:
Whereas Great Mammoth long hath passed away,
And none but I can tell what hide he wore ;
Whilst purblind men, the creatures of a day,
In riddling wonder his great bones survey.”

LIX

Then came an elr, right beauteous to behold,
Whose coat was like a brooklet that the sun
Hath all embroidered with its crooked gold,
It was so quaintly wrought, and overrun
With spangled traceries,—most meet for one
That was a warden of the pearly streams ;
And as he stept out of the shadows dun,
His jewels sparkled in the pale moon’s gleams,
And shot into the air their pointed beams.

LX

Quoth he : " We bear the cold and silver keys
 Of bubbling springs and fountains, that below
 Course thro' the veiny earth,—which when they freeze
 Into hard chrysolites, we bid to flow.
 Creeping like subtle snakes, when as they go,
 We guide their windings to melodious falls,
 At whose soft murmurings, so sweet and low,
 Poets have turned their smoothest madrigals,
 To sing to ladies in their banquet halls.

LXI

" And when the hot sun with his steadfast heat
 Parches the river god,—whose dusty urn
 Drips miserly, till soon his crystal feet
 Against his pebbly floor wax faint and burn,
 And languid fish, unpoised, grow sick and yearn,—
 Then scoop we hollows in some sandy nook,
 And little channels dig, wherein we turn
 The thread-worn rivulet, that all forsook
 The Naiad-lily, pining for her brook.

LXII

" Wherefore, by thy delight in cool green meads,
 With living sapphires daintily inlaid,—
 In all soft songs of waters and their reeds,—
 And all reflections in a streamlet made,
 Haply of thy own love, that, disarrayed,
 Kills the fair lily with livelier white,—
 By silver trouts upspringing from green shade,
 And winking stars reduplicate at night,
 Spare us, poor ministers to such delight."

LXIII

Howbeit his pleading and his gentle looks
 Moved not the spiteful Shade :—Quoth he, “Your taste
 Shoots wide of mine, for I despise the brooks
 And slavish rivulets that run to waste
 In noontide sweats, or, like poor vassals, haste
 To swell the vast dominion of the sea,
 In whose great presence I am held disgraced,
 And neighbourhood with a king that rivals me
 In ancient might and hoary majesty.

LXIV

“Whereas I ruled in Chaos, and still keep
 The awful secrets of that ancient dearth,
 Before the briny fountains of the deep
 Brimmed up the hollow cavities of earth ;
 I saw each trickling Sea-God at his birth,
 Each pearly Naiad with her oozy locks,
 And infant Titans of enormous girth,
 Whose huge young feet yet stumbled on the rocks,
 Stunning the early world with frequent shocks.

LXV

“Where now is Titan, with his cumbrous brood,
 That sacred the world ?—By this sharp scythe they fell,
 And half the sky was curdled with their blood :
 So have all primal giants sighed farewell.
 No Wardens now by sedgy fountains dwell,
 No pearly Naiads. All their days are done
 That strove with Time, untimely, to excel ;
 Wherefore I raised their progenies, and none
 But my great shadow intercepts the sun !”

LXVI

Then said the timid Fay : “ O mighty Time !
Well hast thou wrought the cruel Titans’ fall,
For they were stained with many a bloody crime :
Great giants work great wrongs—but we are small,
For love goes lowly ;—but Oppression’s tall,
And with surpassing strides goes foremost still
Where love indeed can hardly reach at all ;
Like a poor dwarf o’erburdened with goodwill,
That labours to efface the tracks of ill.

LXVII

“ Man ever strives with Man, but we eschew
The guilty feud, and all fierce strifes abhor ;
Nay, we are gentle as sweet heaven’s dew,
Beside the red and horrid drops of war,
Weeping the cruel hates men battle for,
Which worldly bosoms nourish in our spite ;
For in the gentle breast we ne’er withdraw,
But only when all love hath taken flight,
And youth’s warm gracious heart is hardened quite.

LXVIII

“ So are our gentle natures intertwined
With sweet humanities, and closely knit
In kindly sympathy with human kind.
Witness how we befriend, with elfin wit,
All hopeless maids and lovers—nor omit
Magical succours unto hearts forlorn :
We charm man’s life, and do not perish it ;
So judge us by the helps we showed this morn,
To one who held his wretched days in scorn.

LXIX

“ ’Twas nigh sweet Amwell ;—for the Queen had tasked
Our skill to-day amidst the silver Lea,
Whereon the noontide sun had not yet basked ;
Wherefore some patient man we thought to see,
Planted in mossgrown rushes to the knee,
Beside the cloudy margin cold and dim ;
Howbeit no patient fisherman was he
That cast his sudden shadow from the brim,
Making us leave our toils to gaze on him.

LXX

“ His face was ashy pale, and leaden care
Had sunk the levelled arches of his brow,
Once bridges for his joyous thoughts to fare
Over those melancholy springs and slow,
That from his piteous eyes began to flow,
And fell anon into the chilly stream ;
Which, as his mimicked image showed below,
Wrinkled his face with many a needless seam,
Making grief sadder in its own esteem.

LXXI

“ And lo ! upon the air we saw him stretch
His passionate arms ; and, in a wayward strain,
He ’gan to elegize that fellow wretch
That with mute gestures answered him again,
Saying, ‘ Poor slave, how long wilt thou remain
Life’s sad weak captive in a prison strong,
Hoping with tears to rust away thy chain,
In bitter servitude to worldly wrong ?
Thou wear’st that mortal livery too long ! ’

LXXII

“ This, with more spleenful speeches and some tears,
 When he had spent upon the imaged wave,
 Speedily I convened my elfin peers
 Under the lily-cups, that we might save
 This woeful mortal from a wilful grave
 By shrewd diversions of his mind’s regret,
 Seeing he was mere melancholy’s slave,
 That sank wherever a dark cloud he met,
 And straight was tangled in her secret net.

LXXIII

“ Therefore, as still he watched the water’s flow,
 Daintily we transformed, and with bright fins
 Came glancing through the gloom ; some from below
 Rose like dim fancies when a dream begins,
 Snatching the light upon their purple skins ;
 Then under the broad leaves made slow retire :
 One like a golden galley bravely wins
 Its radiant course—another glows like fire—
 Making that wayward man our pranks admire.

LXXIV

“ And so he banished thought, and quite forgot
 All contemplation of that wretched face ;
 And so we wiled him from that lonely spot
 Along the river’s brink ; till by heaven’s grace,
 He met a gentle haunter of the place,
 Full of sweet wisdom gathered from the brooks,
 Who there discussed his melancholy case
 With wholesome texts learned from kind nature’s book,
 Meanwhile he newly trimmed his lines and hooks.”

LXXV

Herewith the Fairy ceased. Quoth Ariel now :
 " Let me remember how I saved a man,
 Whose fatal noose was fastened on a bough,
 Intended to abridge his sad life's span ;
 For haply I was by when he began
 His stern soliloquy in life's dispraise,
 And overheard his melancholy plan,
 How he had made a vow to end his days,
 And therefore followed him in all his ways

LXXVI

" Through brake and tangled copse, for much he loathed
 All populous haunts, and roamed in forests rude,
 To hide himself from man. But I had clothed
 My delicate limbs with plumes, and still pursued,
 Where only foxes and wild cats intrude,
 Till we were come beside an ancient tree
 Late blasted by a storm. Here he renewed
 His loud complaints—choosing that spot to be
 The scene of his last horrid tragedy.

LXXVII

" It was a wild and melancholy glen,
 Made gloomy by tall firs and cypress dark,
 Whose roots, like any bones of buried men,
 Pushed through the rotten sod for fear's remark :
 A hundred horrid stems, jagged and stark,
 Wrestled with crooked arms in hideous fray,
 Besides sleek ashes with their dappled bark,
 Like crafty serpents climbing for a prey,
 With many blasted oaks mossgrown and grey.

LXXVIII

“ But here upon his final desperate clause
 Suddenly I pronounced so sweet a strain,
 Like a panged nightingale, it made him pause,
 Till half the frenzy of his grief was slain,
 The sad remainder oozing from his brain
 In timely ecstasies of healing tears,
 Which through his ardent eyes began to drain—
 Meanwhile the deadly Fates unclosed their shears :
 So pity me and all my fated peers ! ”

LXXIX

Thus Ariel ended, and was some time hushed :
 When with the hoary Shape a fresh tongue pleads,
 And red as rose the gentle Fairy blushed
 To read the record of her own good deeds :
 “ It chanced,” quoth she, “ in seeking through the meads
 For honeyed cowslips, sweetest in the morn,
 Whilst yet the buds were hung with dewy beads,
 And Echo answered to the huntsman’s horn,
 We found a babe left in the swarths forlorn.

LXXX

“ A little, sorrowful, deserted thing,
 Begot of love, and yet no love begetting ;
 Guiltless of shame, and yet for shame to wring ;
 And too soon banished from a mother’s petting,
 To churlish nurture and the wide world’s fretting,
 For alien pity and unnatural care ;
 Alas ! to see how the cold dew kept wetting
 His childish coats, and dabbled all his hair,
 Like gossamers across his forehead fair.

LXXXI

“ His pretty pouting mouth, witless of speech,
 Lay half-way open like a rose-lipped shell ;
 And his young cheek was softer than a peach,
 Whereon his tears, for roundness, could not dwell,
 But quickly rolled themselves to pearls, and fell,
 Some on the grass, and some against his hand,
 Or haply wandered to the dimpled well,
 Which love beside his mouth had sweetly planned,
 Yet not for tears, but mirth and smilings bland.

LXXXII

“ Pity it was to see those frequent tears
 Falling regardless from his friendless eyes ;
 There was such beauty in those twin blue spheres,
 As any mother’s heart might leap to prize ;
 Blue were they, like the zenith of the skies
 Softened betwixt two clouds, both clear and mild ;
 Just touched with thought, and yet not over wise,
 They showed the gentle spirit of a child,
 Not yet by care or any craft defiled.

LXXXIII

“ Pity it was to see the ardent sun
 Scorching his helpless limbs—it shone so warm
 For kindly shade or shelter he had none,
 Nor mother’s gentle breast, come fair or storm.
 Meanwhile I bade my pitying mates transform
 Like grasshoppers, and then, with shrilly cries,
 All round the Infant noisily we swarm,
 Haply some passing rustic to advice—
 Whilst providential Heaven our care espies,

LXXXIV

“ And sends full soon a tender-hearted hind,
 Who, wondering at our loud unusual note,
 Strays curiously aside, and so doth find
 The orphan child laid in the grass remote,
 And laps the foundling in his russet coat,
 Who thence was nurtured in his kindly cot :
 But how he prospered let proud London quote,
 How wise, how rich, and how renowned he got,
 And chief of all her citizens, I wot.

LXXXV

“ Witness his goodly vessels on the Thames,
 Whose holds were fraught with costly merchandize—
 Jewels from Ind, and pearls for courtly dames,
 And gorgeous silks that Samarcand supplies :
 Witness that Royal Bourse he bade arise,
 The mart of merchants from the East and West,
 Whose slender summits, pointing to the skies,
 Still bear, in token of his grateful breast,
 The tender grasshopper, his chosen crest—

LXXXVI

“ The tender grasshopper, his chosen crest,
 That all the summer, with a tuneful wing,
 Makes merry chirpings in its grassy nest,
 Inspirited with dew to leap and sing :
 So let us also live, eternal King !
 Partakers of the green and pleasant earth :
 Pity it is to slay the meanest thing,
 That, like a mote, shines in the smile of mirth :
 Enough there is of joy's decrease and dearth !

LXXXVII

"Enough of pleasure, and delight, and beauty
 Perished and gone, and hasting to decay ; .
 Enough to sadden even thee, whose duty
 Or spite it is to havoc and to slay :
 Too many a lovely race razed quite away,
 Hath left large gaps in life and human loving :
 Here then begin thy cruel war to stay,
 And spare fresh sighs, and tears, and groans, reproving
 Thy desolating hand for our removing."

LXXXVIII

Now here I heard a shrill and sudden cry,
 And, looking up, I saw the antic Puck
 Grappling with Time, who clutched him like a fly
 Victim of his own sport,—the jester's luck !
 He, whilst his fellows grieved, poor wight, had stuck
 His freakish gauds upon the Ancient's brow,
 And now his ear, and now his beard, would pluck ;
 Whereas the angry churl had snatched him now,
 Crying, "Thou impish mischief, who art thou ?"

LXXXIX

"Alas !" quoth Puck, "a little random elf,
 Born in the sport of nature, like a weed,
 For simple sweet enjoyment of myself,
 But for no other purpose, worth, or need ;
 And yet withal of a most happy breed ;
 And there is Robin Goodfellow besides,
 My partner dear in many a prankish deed
 To make Dame Laughter hold her jolly sides,
 Like merry mummers twain on holy tides.

XC

" 'Tis we that bob the angler's idle cork,
 Till e'en the patient man breathes half a curse ;
 We steal the morsel from the gossip's fork,
 And curdling looks with secret straws disperse,
 Or stop the sneezing chanter at mid verse :
 And when an infant's beauty prospers ill,
 We change, some mothers say, the child at nurse ;
 But any graver purpose to fulfil,
 We have not wit enough, and scarce the will.

XCI

" We never let the canker melancholy
 To gather on our faces like a rust,
 But gloss our features with some change of folly,
 Taking life's fabled miseries on trust,
 But only sorrowing when sorrow must :
 We ruminate no sage's solemn cud,
 But own ourselves a pinch of lively dust
 To frisk upon a wind,—whereas the flood
 Of tears would turn us into heavy mud.

XCII

Beshrew those sad interpreters of nature,
 Who gloze her lively universal law,
 As if she had not formed our cheerful feature
 To be so tickled with the slightest straw !
 So let them vex their mumping mouths, and draw
 The corners downward, like a wat'ry moon,
 And deal in gusty sighs and rainy flaw—
 We will not woo foul weather all too soon,
 Or nurse November on the lap of June.

XCIII

“For ours are winging sprites, like any bird,
 That shun all stagnant settlements of grief;
 And even in our rest our hearts are stirred,
 Like insects settled on a dancing leaf:
 This is our small philosophy in brief,
 Which thus to teach hath set me all agape:
 But dost thou relish it? O hoary chief!
 Unclass thy crooked fingers from my nape,
 And I will show thee many a pleasant scrape.”

XCIV

Then Saturn thus:—shaking his crooked blade
 O’erhead, which made aloft a lightning flash
 In all the fairies’ eyes, dismally frayed!
 His ensuing voice came like the thunder crash—
 Meanwhile the bolt shatters some pine or ash—
 “Thou feeble, wanton, foolish, fickle thing!
 Whom nought can frighten, sadden, or abash,—
 To hope my solemn countenance to wring
 To idiot smiles!—but I will prune thy wing!

XCV

“Lo! this most awful handle of my scythe
 Stood once a Maypole, with a flowery crown,
 Which rustics danced around, and maidens blithe,
 To wanton pipings;—but I plucked it down,
 And robed the May Queen in a churchyard gown,
 Turning her buds to rosemary and rue;
 And all their merry minstrelsy did drown,
 And laid each lusty leaper in the dew;
 So thou shalt fare—and every jovial crew!”

XCVI

Here he lets go the struggling imp, to clutch
His mortal engine with each grisly hand,
Which frights the elfin progeny so much,
They huddle in a heap, and trembling stand
All round Titania, like the queen bee's band,
With sighs and tears and very shrieks of woe !
Meanwhile, some moving argument I planned,
To make the stern Shade merciful,—when lo !
He drops his fatal scythe without a blow !

XCVII

For, just at need, a timely Apparition *
Steps in between, to bear the awful brunt ;
Making him change his horrible position,
To marvel at this comer, brave and blunt,
That dares Time's irresistible affront,
Whose strokes have scarred even the gods of old ;
Whereas this seemed a mortal, at mere hunt
For coney, lighted by the moonshine cold,
Or stalker of stray deer, stealthy and bold.

XCVIII

Who, turning to the small assembled fays,
Doffs to the lily queen his courteous cap,
And holds her beauty for awhile in gaze,
With bright eyes kindling at this pleasant hap ;
And thence upon the fair moon's silver map,
As if in question of this magic chance,
Laid like a dream upon the green earth's lap ;
And then upon old Saturn turns askance,
Exclaiming, with a glad and kindly glance :—

* Shakespeare.

“ Oh, these be Fancy’s revellers by night !
 Stealthy companions of the downy moth—
 Diana’s motes, that flit in her pale light,
 Shunners of sunbeams in diurnal sloth ;
 These be the feasters on night’s silver cloth,—
 The gnat with shrilly trump is their covener,
 Forth from their flowery chambers, nothing loth,
 With lulling tunes to charm the air serener,
 Or dance upon the grass to make it greener.

C

“ These be the pretty genii of the flow’rs,
 Daintily fed with honey and pure dew—
 Midsummer’s phantoms in her dreaming hours,
 King Oberon, and all his merry crew,
 The darling puppets of romance’s view ;
 Fairies, and sprites, and goblin elves we call them,
 Famous for patronage of lovers true ;
 No harm they act, neither shall harm befall them,
 So do not thus with crabbed frowns appal them.”

CI

O what a cry was Saturn’s then !—it made
 The fairies quake. “ What care I for their pranks.
 However they may lovers choose to aid,
 Or dance their roundelays on flow’ry banks ?
 Long must they dance before they earn my thanks,—
 So step aside, to some far safer spot,
 Whilst with my hungry scythe I mow their ranks,
 And leave them in the sun, like weeds to rot,
 And with the next day’s sun to be forgot.”

CII

Anon, he raised afresh his weapon keen ;
 But still the gracious Shade disarmed his aim,
 Stepping with brave alacrity between,
 And made his sere arm powerless and tame.
 His be perpetual glory, for the shame
 Of hoary Saturn in that grand defeat !
 But I must tell, how here Titania came
 With all her kneeling lieges, to entreat
 His kindly succour, in sad tones, but sweet.

CIII

Saying, "Thou seest a wretched queen before thee,
 The fading power of a failing land,
 Who for her kingdom kneeleth to implore thee,
 Now menaced by this tyrant's spoiling hand ;
 No one but thee can hopefully withstand
 That crooked blade he longeth so to lift.
 I pray thee blind him with his own vile sand,
 Which only times all ruins by its drift,
 Or prune his eagle wings that are so swift.

CIV

"Or take him by that sole and grizzled tuft,
 That hangs upon his bald and barren crown ;
 And we will sing to see him so rebuffed,
 And lend our little mights to pull him down,
 And make brave sport of his malicious frown,
 For all his boastful mockery o'er men ;
 For thou wast born I know for this renown,
 By my most magical and inward ken,
 That readeth ev'n at Fate's forestalling pen.
 126

CV

"Nay, by the golden lustre of thine eye,
 And by thy brow's most fair and ample span,
 Thought's glorious palace, framed for fancies high,
 And by thy cheek thus passionately wan,
 I know the signs of an immortal man,—
 Nature's chief darling, and illustrious mate,
 Destined to foil old Death's oblivious plan,
 And shine untarnished by the fogs of Fate,
 Time's famous rival till the final date !

CVI

"O shield us then from this usurping Time,
 And we will visit thee in moonlight dreams ;
 And teach thee tunes to wed unto thy rhyme,
 And dance about thee in all midnight gleams,
 Giving thee glimpses of our magic schemes,
 Such as no mortal's eye hath even seen :
 And, for thy love to us in our extremes,
 Will ever keep thy chaplet fresh and green,
 Such as no poet's wreath hath ever been !

CVII

"And we'll distil thee aromatic dews,
 To charm thy sense, when there shall be no flow'rs ;
 And flavoured syrups in thy drinks infuse,
 And teach the nightingale to haunt thy bow'rs.
 And with our games divert thy weariest hours,
 With all that elfin wits can e'er devise.
 And, this churl dead, there'll be no hasting hours
 To rob thee of thy joys, as now joy flies :"—
 Here she was stopped by Saturn's furious cries.

CVIII

Whom, therefore, the kind Shade rebukes anew,
 Saying, "Thou haggard Sin, go forth, and scoop
 Thy hollow coffin in some churchyard yew,
 Or make th' autumnal flowers turn pale, and droop ;
 Or fell the bearded corn, till gleaners stoop
 Under fat-sheaves—or blast the piny grove ;
 But here thou shalt not harm this pretty group,
 Whose lives are not so frail and feebly wove,
 But leased on Nature's loveliness and love.

CIX

"'Tis these that free the small entangled fly,
 Caught in the venom'd spider's crafty snare ;
 These be the petty surgeons that apply
 The healing balsams to the wounded hare,
 Bedded in bloody fern, no creature's care !
 These be providers for the orphan brood,
 Whose tender mother hath been slain in air,
 Quitting with gaping bill her darling's food,
 Hard by the verge of her domestic wood.

CX

"'Tis these befriend the timid trembling stag,
 When, with a bursting heart beset with fears,
 He feels his saving speed begin to flag ;
 For then they quench the fatal taint with tears,
 And prompt fresh shifts in his alarum'd ears,
 So piteously they view all bloody morts ;
 Or if the gunner, with his arm, appears,
 Like noisy pies and jays, with harsh reports,
 They warn the wildfowl of his deadly sports.

CXI

" For these are kindly ministers of nature,
 To soothe all covert hurts and dumb distress ;
 Pretty they be, and very small of stature—
 For mercy still consorts with littleness ;
 Wherefore the sum of good is still the less,
 And mischief grossest in this world of wrong ;
 So do these charitable dwarfs redress
 The tenfold ravages of giants strong,
 To whom great malice and great might belong.

CXII

" Likewise to them are Poets much beholden
 For secret favours in the midnight glooms ;
 Brave Spenser quaffed out of their goblets golden,
 And saw their tables spread of prompt mushrooms
 And heard their horns of honeysuckle blooms
 Sounding upon the air most soothing soft,
 Like humming bees busy about the brooms—
 And glanced this fair queen's witchery full oft,
 And in her magic wain soared far aloft.

CXIII

" Nay I myself, though mortal, once was nursed
 By fairy gossips, friendly at my birth,
 And in my childish ear glib Mab rehearsed
 Her breezy travels round our planet's girth,
 Telling me wonders of the moon and earth ;
 My gramarye at her grave lap I conned,
 Where Puck hath been convened to make me mirth ;
 I have had from Queen Titania tokens fond,
 And toyed with Oberon's permitted wand.

CXIV

"With figs and plums and Persian dates they fed me,
 And delicate cates after my sunset meal,
 And took me by my childish hand, and led me
 By craggy rocks crested with keeps of steel,
 Whose awful bases deep dark woods conceal,
 Staining some dead lake with their verdant dyes :
 And when the West sparkled at Phoebus' wheel,
 With fairy euphrasy they purged mine eyes,
 To let me see their cities in the skies.

CXV

"'Twas they first schooled my young imagination
 To take its flights like any new-fledged bird,
 And showed the span of wingèd meditation
 Stretched wider than things grossly seen or heard.
 With sweet swift Ariel how I soared and stirred
 The fragrant blooms of spiritual bow'rs !
 'Twas they endeared what I have still preferred,
 Nature's blest attributes and balmy pow'rs,
 Her hills and vales and brooks, sweet birds and flow'rs !

CXVI

"Wherefore with all true loyalty and duty
 Will I regard them in my honouring rhyme,
 With love for love, and homages to beauty,
 And magic thoughts gathered in night's cool clime.
 With studious verse trancing the dragon Time,
 Strong as old Merlin's necromatic spells,
 So these dear monarchs of the summer's prime
 Shall live unstartled by his dreadful yells,
 Till shrill lark warn them to their flowery cells."

CXVII

Look how a poisoned man turns livid black,
 Drugged with a cup of deadly hellebore,
 That sets his horrid features all at rack,—
 So seemed these words into the ear to pour
 Of ghastly Saturn, answering with a roar
 Of mortal pain and spite and almost rage,
 Wherein his grisly arm he raised once more,
 And bade the clustered sinews all engage,
 As if at one fell stroke to wreck an age.

CXVIII

Whereas the blade flashed on the dinted ground,
 Down through his steadfast foe, yet made no scar
 On that immortal Shade, or death-like wound ;
 But Time was long benumbed, and stood ajar,
 And then with baffled rage took flight afar,
 To weep his hurt in some Cimmerian gloom,
 Or meaner fames (like mine) to mock and mar,
 Or sharp his scythe for royal strokes of doom,
 Whetting its edge on some old Cæsar's tomb.

CXIX

Howbeit he vanished in the forest shade,
 Distantly heard as if some grumbling pard,
 And, like Narcissus, to a sound decayed ;
 Meanwhile the fays clustered the gracious Bard,
 The darling centre of their dear regard :
 Beside of sundry dances on the green,
 Never was mortal man so brightly starred,
 Or won such pretty homages, I ween.
 "Nod to him, Elves !" cries the melodious queen.

CXX

" Nod to him, Elves, and flutter round about him,
 And quite enclose him with your pretty crowd,
 And touch him lovingly, for that, without him,
 The silkworm now had spun our dreary shroud ;
 But he hath all dispersed death's tearful cloud,
 And Time's dread effigy scared quite away :
 Bow to him then, as though to me ye bowed,
 And his dear wishes prosper and obey
 Wherever love and wit can find a way !

CXXI

" 'Noint him with fairy dews of magic savours,
 Shaken from orient buds still pearly wet,
 Roses and spicy pinks,—and, of all favours,
 Plant in his walks the purple violet,
 And meadow-sweet under the hedges set,
 To mingle breaths with dainty eglantine
 And honeysuckles sweet,—nor yet forget
 Some pastoral flowery chaplets to entwine,
 To vie the thoughts about his brow benign !

CXXII

" Let no wild things astonish him or fear him,
 But tell them all how mild he is of heart,
 Till e'en the timid hares go frankly near him,
 And eke the dappled does, yet never start ;
 Nor shall their fawns into the thickets dart,
 Nor wrens forsake their nests among the leaves,
 Nor speckled thrushes flutter far apart ;
 But bid the sacred swallow haunt his caves,
 To guard his roof from lightning and from thieves.

CXXIII

“ Or when he goes the nimble squirrel’s visitor,
 Let the brown hermit bring his hoarded nuts,
 For, tell him, this is Nature’s kind Inquisitor,—
 Though man keeps cautious doors that conscience shuts,
 For conscious wrong all curious quest rebuts ;
 Nor yet shall bees uncase their jealous stings,
 However he may watch their straw built huts ;
 So let him learn the crafts of all small things,
 Which he will hint most aptly when he sings.”

CXXIV

Here she leaves off, and with a graceful hand
 Waves thrice three splendid circles round his head ;
 Which, though deserted by the radiant wand,
 Wears still the glory which her waving shed,
 Such as erst crowned the old Apostle’s head,
 To show the thoughts there harboured were divine,
 And on immortal contemplations fed ;
 Goodly it was to see that glory shine
 Around a brow so lofty and benign !

CXXV

Goodly it was to see the elfin brood
 Contend for kisses of his gentle hand,
 That had their mortal enemy withstood,
 And stayed their lives, fast ebbing with the sand.
 Long while this strife engaged the pretty band ;
 But now bold Chanticleer, from farm to farm,
 Challenged the dawn creeping o’er eastern land,
 And well the fairies knew that shrill alarm
 Which sounds the knell of every elfish charm.

And soon the rolling mist, that 'gan arise
 From plashy mead and undiscovered stream,
 Earth's morning incense to the early skies,
 Crept o'er the failing landscape of my dream.
 Soon faded then the Phantom of my theme—
 A shapeless Shade, that fancy disavowed,
 And shrank to nothing in the mist extreme.
 Then flew Titania,—and her little crowd,
 Like flocking linnets, vanished in a cloud.

TOM HOOD



SHERWOOD

SHERWOOD in the twilight, is Robin Hood awake ?
Grey and ghostly shadows are gliding through the
brake ;

Shadows of the dappled deer, dreaming of the morn,
Dreaming of a shadowy man that winds a shadowy horn.

Robin Hood is here again : all his merry thieves
Hear a ghostly bugle-note shivering through the leaves,
Calling as he used to call, faint and far away,
In Sherwood, in Sherwood, about the break of day.

Merry, merry England has kissed the lips of June :
All the wings of fairyland were here beneath the moon ;
Like a flight of rose-leaves fluttering in a mist
Of opal and ruby and pearl and amethyst.

Merry, merry England is waking as of old,
With eyes of blither hazel and hair of brighter gold :
For Robin Hood is here again beneath the bursting
spray
In Sherwood, in Sherwood, about the break of day.

Love is in the greenwood building him a house
Of wild rose and hawthorn and honeysuckle boughs
Love is in the greenwood : dawn is in the skies ;
And Marian is waiting with a glory in her eyes.

Hark ! The dazzled laverock climbs the golden steep :
Marian is waiting : is Robin Hood asleep ?
Round the fairy grass-rings frolic elf and fay,
In Sherwood, in Sherwood, about the break of day.

Oberon, Oberon, rake away the gold,
Rake away the red leaves, roll away the mould,
Rake away the gold leaves, roll away the red,
And wake Will Scarlett from his leafy forest bed.

Friar Tuck and Little John are riding down together
With quarter-staff and drinking-can and grey goose-
feather ;
The dead are coming back again ; the years are rolled
away
In Sherwood, in Sherwood, about the break of day.

Softly over Sherwood the South wind blows ;
All the heart of England hid in every rose
Hears across the greenwood the sunny whisper leap
Sherwood in the red dawn, is Robin Hood asleep ?

Hark, the voice of England wakes him as of old
And, shattering the silence with a cry of brighter gold,
Bugles in the greenwood echo from the steep,
Sherwood in the red dawn, is Robin Hood asleep ?

Where the deer are gliding down the shadowy glen
All across the glades of fern he calls his merry men ;
Doublets of the Lincoln green glancing through the May
In Sherwood, in Sherwood, about the break of day ;

Calls them and they answer : from aisles of oak and ash
Rings the *Follow ! Follow !* and the boughs begin to
crash ;
The ferns begin to flutter and the flowers begin to fly ;
And through the crimson dawning the robber band goes
by.

Robin ! Robin ! Robin ! All his merry thieves
Answer as the bugle-note shivers through the leaves ;
Calling as he used to call, faint and far away,
In Sherwood, in Sherwood, about the break of day.

ALFRED NOYES



ROBIN GOODFELLOW

FROM Oberon, in fairy land,
The King of ghosts and shadows there,
Mad Robin I, at his command,
Am sent to view the night-sports here.
What revel rout
Is kept about,
In every corner where I go,
I will o'ersee,
And merry be,
And make good sport, with ho, ho, ho !

More swift than lightning can I fly
About this airy welkin soon,
And, in a minute's space, descry
Each thing that's done below the moon.
There's not a hag
Or ghost shall wag,
Or cry, 'ware goblins ! where I go ;
But Robin I
Their feats will spy,
And send them home with ho, ho, ho !

Whene'er such wanderers I meet,
As from their night-sports they trudge home,
With counterfeiting voice I greet,
And call them on with me to roam :
Through woods, through lakes ;
Through bogs, through brakes ;
Or else, unseen, with them I go,
All in the nick,
To play some trick,
And frolic it, with ho, ho, ho !

Sometimes I meet them like a man,
Sometimes an ox, sometimes a hound ;
And to a horse I turn me can,
To trip and trot about them round.
But if to ride
My back they stride,
More swift than wind away I go,
O'er hedge and lands,
Through pools and ponds,
I hurry, laughing, ho, ho, ho !

When lads and lasses merry be,
With possets and with jackets fine ;
Unseen of all the company,
I eat their cakes and sip their wine !
And to make sport,
I puff and snort :
And out the candles I do blow :
The maids I kiss
They shriek—Who's this ?
I answer nought but ho, ho, ho !

Yet now and then, the maids to please
At midnight I card up their wool ;
And, while they sleep and take their ease,
With wheel to threads their flax I pull.
I grind at mill
Their malt up still ;
I dress their hemp ; I spin their tow ;
If any wake,
And would me take,
I wend me, laughing, ho, ho, ho !

When any need to borrow aught,
We lend them what they do require :
And, for the use demand we nought ;
Our own is all we do desire.
If to repay
They do delay,
Abroad amongst them then I go,
And night by night,
I them affright,
With pinchings, dreams, and ho, ho, ho !

When lazy queens have nought to do,
But study how to cog and lie :
To make debate and mischief too
Twixt one another secretly :
I mark their gloze,
And it disclose
To them whom they have wronged so :
When I have done,
I get me gone,
And leave them scolding, ho, ho, ho !

When men do traps and engines set
In loop-holes, where the vermin creep,
Who from their folds and houses get
Their ducks and geese, and lambs and sheep ;
I spy the gin,
And enter in,
And seem a vermin taken so ;
And when they there
Approach me near,
I leap out laughing, ho, ho ho !

By wells and rills, in meadows green,
We nightly dance our hey-de-guies ;
And to our fairy king and queen,
We chant our moonlight minstrelsies.
When larks 'gin sing,
Away we fling ;
And babes new born, steal as we go,
And elf in bed
We leave in stead,
And wend us laughing, ho, ho, ho !

From hag-bred Merlin's time, have I
Thus nightly revelled to and fro ;
And for my pranks men call me by
The name of Robin Goodfellow.
Friends, ghosts, and sprites,
Who haunt the nights,
The hags and goblins do me know ;
And beldames old
My feats have told,
So vale, vale ; ho, ho, ho !

ANON.

THE FAIRY'S WARNING

The fairy Floretta comes to warn the shepherdess Sylvia that two fiends are on their way to seize her.

FLORETTA. Oh, see my tears ! Oh, hear my cries !

My love ! my beauty ! rise ! arise !

Sit not, I pray thee, chanting there

Wild ditties to the ruthless air,

Like the lost Genius of Despair !

Two friends are hither winging fast

To seize my lovely-one at last.

Sylvia !—Dost hear me ?—

Sylvia. Bird !

Floretta. O come !

Return to thy forgotton home !

Hear ye not how the valleys mourn—

“ When will our Shepherdess return ? ”

Return ! return ! the rocks of gray

And murmuring streams and hollows say !

Sylvia. Ay, when I have sung my song indeed !

—When I have sung my song !

Was Lubin not a generous swain

To give his love her heart again ?

He sent her back the sweet love-token,

The heart ;—but then, indeed—’twas broken !

What does your fairy-hood say to that ?—Do your little goodies spin thread fine and strong enough to bind up a broken heart ?—If so I will buy it of them for a silver penny cut out of the moon. Bear them my offer ; I will sing here till you come back.

Floretta. Ah, stay not ! stay not ! lily mine !
Come o’er, come o’er the demon line !

One moment, and the line is crost !
One moment, and my flower is lost !—
Wilt thou not listen to my wo !
Would I neglect my Sylvia so ?
Once when I was thy favourite ouphe ;
Thou could'st not pet me half enough ;
But now to any nook I may
And weep myself to dew away !—
Ah ! thou wilt come !—in faith thou must !—
I'll strew thy path with petal-dust,
And brush thy soft cheek with my wing,
As round thee merrily I sing
A gay, light-tripping, frolic song,
To lure thy charmed steps along.

My lady sweet ! O come with me
To where the springs of nectar flow,
And like a cunning cuckoo-bee
Before thee, I will singing go,
With cheer ! cheer ! cheer !
When flowery beds or banks appear.
I'll lead thee where the festal bees
Quaff their wild stores of crusted wine,
From censers sweet, and chalices
With lips almost as red as thine.
And cheer ! cheer ! cheer !
I'll cry when such a feast is near.

Sylvia. O hapless maiden ! Come !
To fairer scenes and brighter bowers
Than bloom in all the world beside,
Where thou shalt pass Elysian hours—
I'll be thy duteous Honey-guide.

And cheer ! cheer ! cheer !

Shall be my note through all the year.
Terror ! O terrors ! hither they
Bend them with all the might they may
To bear my shepherdess away.
The demons !—Oh, unhappy one !
Art thou enchanted to a stone ?
Up ! up ! or thou art all undone !

Oh, come ! Oh, come my lady-dove ?
My peerless flower ! my Queen of May !

Enter GRUMIEL and MOMIEL.

I'll call thee every name of love,
If thou wilt wend with me away !
But wo ! wo ! wo !
She will not answer ay or no !

Grumiel. Ha ! ha ! have we caught thee at last ?

Momiel. Napping, i' faith ! like a wild cat, with her
eyes open. Come bring her along.

Floretta. O my lost flower ! my flower !

Momiel. Ay. Trip-Madame is her name : see how
kindly she comes to it !

Grumiel. What is that buzzing thing there ?

Momiel. Why, nothing less than three barley-corns'
length of woman-kind, in a huge petticoat made of a
white thumbstall, and having wings as long as a brown
hornet's or a caterpillar's after conversion. A pocket-
piece !—She, too, has a name, Busybody. Wilt come
with, Gadabout ?

Grumiel. No, we have more of the sex by one than is
welcome.

Momiel. Nay, thou may'st flutter and squeal and ricket about, like an old wren (as thou art!) when the schoolboy filches thy young one. Adieu, mistress! and bear my respects to Monsieur Saint Vitus, thy dancing master.

Grumiel. Come on, thou gibbering ape!

Momiel. Then, I may say, like one of my kindred in the fable, putting my hand upon this wig-block of thine,—"Bless me! what a fine head were this, if it only had brains!"

Grumiel. I'll—

Momiel. Go! go on!—Take a graybeard's advice: never open thy mouth but to eat thy porridge. Though thou didst live upon garbage, nothing would ever go into thy throat that was not better than aught that came out of it. Go on, pray thee! Despise not the use of thy trotters,—Good-bye, little Mistress Hop o' my thumb!—warm work for an afternoon, Mistress! Thou look'st for all the world like a humming-top on the wing; and indeed wouldst make a most lively representation of the proverb—a reel in the bottle. Go on, buzzard!

[*Exeunt FIENDS with SYLVIA.*]

Floretta. Now may I to some covert creep,
And like the secret bird of sorrow

In darkling tears for ever weep,
Nor bid again the sun good morrow!

And wo! wo! wo!

Shall be my note where'er I go.

GEORGE DARLEY

THE ELF-KING'S HUNTING

OH, the Elf-King went a-hunting (and I was there to see) :

He rode a chestnut hunter and he sat him fair and free.

His cap was ruby satin ; his coat was green and gold ;

And his breeches they were red brocade, a wonder to behold ;

And his merry eyes were gleaming, ever gleaming as he rode ;

And he glittered and he glanced

As he caracolled and pranced

With a word of careless kindness to the hunter he bestrode.

And his grooms came prancing after, and I saw the huntsman pass

Very cheerfully and briskly as he rode across the grass,

They were all as neat and tidy and as speckless as a pin,

And the hounds came trotting gaily with the whips to whip them in.

Then they paused before the laurel-hedge ; the huntsman laid them on,

All the merry little pack

While the whips were going crack

Round the laggards as they lingered, till the lot of them were gone.

So they feathered through the laurels, but they drew the laurels blank ;

And they cantered round the cabbage-patch and straggled up the bank ;

And the King he called the huntsman, and he said,
 "We'll try the roots :
It's not for drawing blank all night that I've put on my
 boots.
We must find a mouse in no time or you'll answer with
 your head."
 And the huntsman said, "Ay, ay,
 We must try, Sir, we must try ;
But you'll be no better off, Sir, for a quarry when I'm
 dead."

Then they took a strip of beetroot, and I saw them flash
 away,
All the rout of little riders, but I thought it best to stay,
And the horn was sounding fainter as it tooted here and
 there,
And I trembled for the huntsman, though he spoke the
 king so fair.
But there came a sudden yelping all the beetroot leaves
 among,
 And I heard a tally-ho,
 And the music seemed to grow,
And I knew that they had found there for the pack were
 giving tongue.

Then they had it through the garden, through the
 Lovers' Walk and all,
Through the orchard to the tool-shed, where the Elf-
 King had a fall.
But he didn't mind a bit, not he ; he stumbled to his
 feet—
With his satin cap all battered in he didn't look so neat—

And they caught the royal chestnut, and they tightened
up his girth,

And the King said, "Try again ! "

But the huntsman : " It's in vain !

While your Majesty's been falling every mouse has gone
to earth."

R. C. LEHMANN

QUEEN MAB

O, THEN I see Queen Mab hath been with you.
She is the fairies' midwife, and she comes
In shape no bigger than an agate-stone
On the fore-finger of an alderman,
Drawn with a team of little atomies
Athwart men's noses as they lie asleep ;
Her waggon-spokes made of long spinners' legs,
The cover of the wings of grasshoppers,
The traces of the smallest spider's web,
The collars of the moonshine's watery beams,
Her whip of cricket's bone, the lash of film,
Her waggoner a small grey-coated gnat,
Not half so big as a round little worm
Prick'd from the lazy finger of a maid ;
Her chariot is an empty hazel-nut
Made by the joiner squirrel or old grub,
'Time out o' mind the fairies' coach-makers.
And in this state she gallops night by night
Through lovers' brains, and then they dream of love ;
O'er courtiers' knees, that dream on court'sies straight ;
O'er lawyers' fingers, who straight dream of fees ;
O'er ladies' lips, who straight on kisses dream,
Which oft the angry Mab with blisters plagues,
Because their breaths with sweetmeats tainted are :
Sometimes she gallops o'er a courtier's nose,
And then dreams he of smelling out a suit ;
And sometimes comes she with a tithe-pig's tail
Tickling a parson's nose as a'lies asleep,
Then dreams he of another benefice :
Sometimes she driveth o'er a soldier's neck,
And then dreams he of cutting foreign throats,
Of breaches, ambuscadoes, Spanish blades,

Of healths five-fathom deep ; and then anon
Drums in his ear, at which he starts and wakes,
And being thus frightened swears a prayer or two
And sleeps again. This is that very Mab
That plats the manes of horses in the night,
And bakes the elf locks in foul sluttish hairs
Which once untangled much misfortune bodes.

SHAKESPEARE

A HOLYDAY NIGHT

SOMETIMES, with secure delight
The upland hamlets will invite
When the merry bells ring round
And the jocund rebecks sound
To many a youth and many a maid
Dancing in the checkered shade,
And young and old come forth to play
On a sunshine holyday,
Till the livelong daylight fail :
Then to the spicy nut-brown ale,
With stories told of many a feat :
How fairy Mab the junket eat ;
She was pinched and pulled, she said ;
And he, by friar's lantern led,
Tells how the drudging goblin sweat
To earn his cream-bowl duly set,
When, in one night, ere glimpse of morn,
His shadowy flail hath threshed the corn
That ten day-labourers could not end ;
Then lies him down the lubber fiend,
And, stretched out all the chimney's length,
Basks at the fire his hairy strength,
And crop-full, out of doors he flings,
Ere the first cock his matin rings.
Thus done the tales, to bed they creep,
By whispering winds soon lulled asleep.

MILTON (" L'Allegro ")

FALSTAFF AND THE FAIRIES

Windsor Park.

Enter SIR HUGH EVANS disguised, with others as Fairies.

EVANS. Trib, trib, fairies ; come ; and remember your parts ; be pold, I pray you ; follow me into the pit ; and when I give the watch-ords, do as I pid you ; come, come ; trib, trib. [*Exeunt.*]

Enter FALSTAFF disguised as Herne the Hunter.

Falstaff. The Windsor bell hath struck twelve ; the minute draws on. . . . I think the devil will not have me damned, lest the oil that's in me should set hell on fire ; he would never else cross me thus.

Enter SIR HUGH EVANS, disguised as before ; PISTOL, as Hobgoblin ; MISTRESS QUICKLY, ANNE PAGE, and others as Fairies, with tapers.

Quick. Fairies, black, grey, green and white,
You moonshine revellers, and shades of night,
You orphan heirs of fixed destiny,
Attend your office and your quality,
Crier Hobgoblin, make the fairy o-yes.

Pist. Elves, list your names ; silence, you airy toys.
Cricket, to Windsor chimneys shalt thou leap :
Where fires thou find'st unraked and hearths unswept,
There pinch the maids as blue as bilberry :
Our radiant queen hates sluts and sluttery.

Falstaff. They are fairies ; he that speaks to them
shall die :
I'll wink and couch : no man their works must eye.
[*Lies down upon his face.*]

Evans. Where's Bede? Go you, and where you find
a maid

That, ere she sleep, has thrice her prayers said,
Raise up the organs of her fantasy ;
Sleep she as sound as careless infancy :
But those as sleep and think not on their sins,
Pinch them, arms, legs, backs, shoulders, sides, and shins.

Quick. About, about !

Search Windsor Castle, elves, within and out :
Strew good luck, ouches, on every sacred room :
That it may stand till the perpetual doom,
In state as wholesome as in state 'tis fit,
Worthy the owner and the owner it.
The several chairs of order look you scour
With juice of balm and every precious flower :
Each fair instalment, coat, and several crest,
With loyal blazon, evermore be blest !
And nightey, meadow-fairies, look you sing,
Like to the Garter's compass, in a ring :
The expressure that it bears, green let it be,
More fertile-fresh than all the field to see ;
And "Honi soit qui mal y pense" write
In emerald tufts, flowers purple, blue, and white ;
Like sapphire, pearl, and rich embroidery,
Buckled below fair knighthood's bending knee :
Fairies use flowers for their charactery.
Away ! disperse ! but, till 'tis one o'clock,
Our dance of custom round about the oak
Of Herne the hunter, let us not forget.

Evans. Pray you, lock hand in hand ; yourselves in
order set ;
And twenty glow-worms shall our lanterns be,
To guide our measure round about the tree.

But, stay ; I smell a man of middle-earth.

Falstaff. Heavens defend me from that Welsh fairy, lest he transform me to a piece of cheese !

Pist. Vile worm, thou wast o'erlooked even in thy birth.

Quick. With trial-fire touch me his finger-end :
If he be chaste, the flame will back descend
And turn him to no pain ; but if he start,
It is the flesh of a corrupted heart.

Pist. A trial, come.

Evans. Come, will this wood take fire ?

[*They burn him with their tapers.*]

Falstaff. Oh, oh, oh !

Quick. Corrupt, corrupt, and tainted in desire !
About him, fairies ; sing a scornful rhyme ;
And, as you trip, still pinch him to your time.

Song

Pinch him, fairies, mutually ;
Pinch him for his villainy ;
Pinch him, and burn him, and turn him about,
Till candles, and starlight, and moonshine be out.

SHAKESPEARE

FAIRY REVELS

OMNES. Pinch him, pinch him, black and blue,
Saucy mortals must not view
What the queen of stars is doing,
Nor pry into our fairy wooing.

1 *Fairy*. Pinch him blue—

2 *Fairy*. And pinch him black—

3 *Fairy*. Let him not lack
Sharp nails to pinch him blue and red
Till sleep has rocked his addlehead.

4 *Fairy*. For the trespass he hath done,
Spots o'er all his flesh shall run.

Kiss Endymion, kiss his eyes,
Then to our midnight heidegyes.*

JOHN LYLY

* Rustic dances.



THE HAUNTED CHAMBER

GULLCRAMMER, *a conceited student, is ushered into his sleeping apartment (in the ruinous castle of a decayed Scottish baron) by FLORA, the baron's daughter, who sets on the table a flask with the lamp.*

FLO. A flask in case your Reverence be athirsty ;

A light, in case your Reverence be afear'd ;—
And so, sweet slumber to your Reverence.

Gul. Kind Mistress Flora, will you ? eh ! eh ! eh !

Flo. Will I what ?

Gul. Tarry a little ?

Flo. (smiling) Kind Master Gullcrammer,
How can you ask me aught so unbecoming ?

Gul. Oh, fie, fie, fie !—Believe me, Mistress Flora,
'Tis not for that—but being guided through
Such dreary galleries, stairs, and suites of rooms,
To this same cubicle, I'm somewhat loth
To bid adieu to pleasant company.

Flo. A flattering compliment !—In plain truth you
are frighten'd.

Gul. What ! frightened ?—I—I—am not timorous.

Flo. Perhaps you've heard this is our haunted
chamber ?

But then it is our best—Your Reverence knows,
That in all tales which turn upon a ghost,
Your traveller belated has the luck
To enjoy the haunted room—it is a rule :—
To some it were a hardship, but to you,
Who are a scholar, and not timorous—

Gul. I did not say I was not timorous,
I said I was not temerarious.
I'll to the hall again.

Flo. You'll do your pleasure,
But you have somehow moved my father's anger,
And you had better meet our playful Owlspiegle—
So is our goblin call'd—than face Lord Oswald.

Gul. Owlspiegle?—
It is an uncouth and outlandish name,
And in mine ears sounds fiendish.

Flo. Hush, hush, hush !
Perhaps he hears us now—(*in an undertone*)—A merry
spirit ;

None of your elves that pinch folks black and blue,
For lack of cleanliness.

Gul. As for that, Mistress Flora,
My taffeta doublet hath been duly brush'd,
My shirt hebdomadal put on this morning.

Flo. Why, you need fear no goblins. But this Owlspiegle

Is of another class ;—yet has his frolics ;
Cuts hair, trims beards, and plays amid his antics
The office of a sinful mortal barber.
Such is at least the rumour.

Gul. He will not cut my clothes, or scar my face,
Or draw my blood ?

Flo. Enormities like these
Were never charged against him.

Gul. And, Mistress Flora, would you smile on me,
If, prick'd by the fond hope of your approval,
I should endure this venture ?

Flo. I do hope
I shall have cause to smile.

Gul. Well, in that hope
I will embrace the achievement for thy sake. [*She is going.*]
Yet, stay, stay, stay !—on second thoughts I will not—

I've thought on it, and will the mortal cudgel
Rather endure than face the ghostly razor !
Your crabtree's tough but blunt,—your razor's polish'd,
But, as the proverb goes, 'tis cruel sharp.
I'll to thy father, and unto his pleasure
Submit these destined shoulders.

Fla. But you shall not
Believe me, sir, you shall not ; he is desperate,
And better far be trimm'd by ghost or goblin,
Than by my sire in anger ;—there are stores
Of hidden treasure, too, and Heaven knows what,
Buried among these ruins—you shall stay.
(*Apart.*) And if indeed there be such sprite as Owl-
spiegle,
And, lacking him, that thy fear plague thee not
Worse than a goblin, I have miss'd my purpose,
Which else stands good in either case.—Good-night, sir.
[*Exit, and double locks the door.*]

Gul. Nay, hold ye, hold ! Nay, gentle Mistress
Flora,
Wherefore this ceremony ? She has lock'd me in,
And left me to the goblin !—(*Listening.*) So, so, so !
I hear her light foot trip to such a distance,
That I believe the castle's breadth divides me
From human company.—I'm ill at ease—
But if this citadel (*Laying his hand on his stomach*) were
better victual'd,

It would be better mann'd. [*Sits down and drinks.*
She has a footstep light, and taper ankle. [*Chuckles.*
Aha ! that ankle ! yet, confound it too,
But for those charms Melchisedek had been
Snug in his bed at Mucklewhame—I say,
Confound her footstep, and her instep too,

To use a cobbler's phrase.—There I was quaint.
Now, what to do in this vile circumstance,
To watch or go to bed, I can't determine ;
Were I a-bed, the ghost might catch me napping.
And if I watch, my terrors will increase
As ghostly hours approach. I'll to my bed
E'en in my taffeta doublet, shrink my head
Beneath the clothes—leave the lamp burning there,
And trust to fate the issue. [Sets it on the table.

*[He lays aside his cloak, and brushes it, as from habit,
starting at every moment ; ties a napkin over his head ;
then shrinks beneath the bed-clothes. He starts once or
twice, and at length seems to go to sleep. A bell tolls
ONE. He leaps up in his bed.*

Gul. I had just coax'd myself to sweet forgetfulness,
And that confounded bell—I hate all bells,
Except a dinner-bell—and yet I lie, too,—
I love the bell that soon shall tell the parish
Of Gabblegoose, Melchisedek's incumbent—
And shall the future minister of Gabblegoose,
Whom his parishioners will soon require
To exorcise their ghosts, detect their witches,
Lie shivering in his bed for a pert goblin,
Whom, be he switch'd or cocktail'd, horn'd or poll'd,
A few tight Hebrew words will soon send packing ?
Tush ! I will rouse the parson up within me,
And bid defiance— (A distant noise).

In the name of Heaven,
What sounds are these ?—O Lord ! this comes of rash-
ness ! [Draws his head down under the bed clothes.

Duet without, between OWLSPIEGLE and COCKLEDEMOY.

Owls. Cockledemoy,
My boy, my boy.
Cockl. Here, father, here.
Owls. Now the pole-star's red and burning,
And the witch's spindle turning,
Appear, appear !

Gul. (*who has again raised himself and listened with great terror to the Duet*)—
I have heard of the devil's dam before,
But never of his child. Now, Heaven deliver me.
The Papists have the better of us there,—
They have their Latin prayers, cut and dried,
And pat for such occasion.—I can think
Of nought but the vernacular.

Owls. Cockledemoy !
My boy, my boy.
We'll sport us here—
Cockl. Our gambols play,
Like elfe and fay ;
Owls. And domineer,
Both. Laugh, frolic, and frisk, till the morning
appear,
Cockl. Lift latch—open clasp—
Shoot bolt—and burst hasp !

[*The door opens with violence. Enter BLACKTHORN as OWLSPIEGLE, fantastically dressed as a Spanish Barber, tall, thin, emaciated, and ghostly ; KATLEEN, as COCKLEDEMOMY, attends as his page. All their manners, tones, and motions, are fantastic, as those of Goblins. They make two or three times the circuit of the Room, without*

*seeming to see GULLCRAMMER. They then resume their
Chaunt, or Recitative.*

Owls. Cockledemoy !
My boy, my boy,
What wilt thou do that will give thee joy ?
Wilt thou ride on the midnight owl ?
Cockl. No ; for the weather is stormy and foul.
Owls. Cockledemoy !
My boy, my boy,
What will thou do that can give thee joy ?
With a needle for a sword, and a thimble for a hat,
Wilt thou fight a traverse with the castle cat ?
Cockl. Oh no ! she has claws, and I like not that.

Gul. I see the devil is a doting father,
And spoils his children—'tis the surest way
To make cursed imps of them. They see me not—
What will they think on next ? It must be own'd,
They have a dainty choice of occupations.

Owls. Cockledemoy !
My boy, my boy,
What shall we do that can give thee joy ?
Shall we go seek for a cuckoo's nest.
Cockl. That's best, that's best !
About, about,
Both. Like an elvish scout,
The cuckoo's a gull, and we'll soon find him out.

*[They search the room with mops and mows. At length
COCKLEDEMOY jumps on the bed. GULLCRAMMER
raises himself half up, supporting himself by his hands.*

COCKLEDEMOY *does the same, and grins at him, then skips from the bed, and runs to OWLSPIEGLE.*

Cockl. I've found the nest,
And in it a guest,
With a sable cloak and a taffeta vest ;
He must be wash'd, and trimm'd, and dress'd,
To please the eyes he loves the best.

Owls. That's best, that's best.

Both. He must be shaved, and trimm'd, and dress'd,
To please the eyes he loves the best.

[They arrange shaving things on the table, and sing as they prepare them.]

Both. Know that all of the humbug, the bite, and the
buz,
Of the make-believe world, becomes forfeit to us.

Owls. (*sharpening his razor*)—
The sword this is made of was lost in a fray
By a fop, who first bullied and then ran away ;
And the strap, from the hide of a lame racer, sold
By Lord Match, to his friend, for some hundreds in gold,
Both. For all of the humbug, the bite, and the buz,
Of the make-believe world, becomes forfeit to us.

Cockl. (*placing the napkin*)—
And this cambric napkin, so white and so fair.
At an usurer's funeral I stole from the heir.

[Drops something from a vial, as going to make suds.]
This dewdrop I caught from one eye of his mother,
Which wept while she ogled the parson with t'other.

Both. For all of the humbug, the bite, and the buz,
Of the make-believe world, becomes forfeit to us.

Owls. (*arranging the lather and the basin*)—

My soap-ball is of the mild alkali made,
Which the soft dedicator employs in his trade ;
And it froths with the pith of a promise, that's sworn
By a lover at night, and forgot on the morn.

Both. For all of the humbug, the bite and the buz,
Of the make-believe world, becomes forfeit to us.

Halloo, halloo,
The blackcock crew,
Thrice shriek'd hath the owl, thrice croak'd hath the
raven,
Here, ho ! Master Gullcrammer, rise and be shaven !

Da capo.

Gul. (*who has been observing them*)
I'll pluck a spirit up ; they're merry goblins
And will deal mildly. I will soothe their humour ;
Besides, my beard lacks trimming.

[*He rises from his bed, and advances with great symptoms
of trepidation, but affecting an air of composure. The
Goblins receive him with fantastic ceremony.*]

Gentlemen, 'tis your will I should be trimm'd—
E'en do your pleasure. [*They point to a seat—he sits.*]

Think, howsoe'er,
Of me as one who hates to see his blood ;
Therefore I do beseech you, signior,
Be gentle in your craft. I know those barbers.
One would have harrows driven across his visnomy,
Rather than they should touch it with a razor.

OWLSPIEGLE *shaves* GULLCRAMMER, *while*
COCKLEDEMOY *sings.*

Father never started hair,
Shaved too close, or left too bare—

Father's razor slips as glib
As from courtly tongue a fib.
Whiskers, mustache, he can trim in
Fashion meet to please the women ;
Sharp's his blade, perfumed his lather !
Happy those are trimm'd by father !

Gul. That's a good boy. I love to hear a child
Stand for his father, if he were the devil.

[He motions to rise.]

Craving your pardon, sir.—What ! sit again ?
My hair lacks not your scissors.

[OWLSPIEGLE insists on his sitting.]

Nay, if you're peremptory, I'll ne'er dispute it,
Nor eat the cow and choke upon the tail—
E'en trim me to your fashion.

*[OWLSPIEGLE cuts his hair, and shaves his head,
ridiculously.]*

COCKLEDEMOY (*sings as before*).

Hair-breadth 'scapes, and hair-breadth snares,
Hair-brain'd follies, ventures, cares,
Part when father clips your hairs.
If there is a hero frantic,
Or a lover too romantic ;—
If threescore seeks second spouse,
Or fourteen lists lover's vows,
Bring them here—for a Scotch boddle,
Owlspiegle shall trim their noddle.

*[They take the napkin from about GULLCRAMMER's
neck. He makes bows of acknowledgment, which they
return fantastically, and sing—]*

Thrice crow'd hath the blackcock, thrice croak'd hath
the raven,
And Master Melchisedek Gullcrammer's shaven !

Gul. My friends, you are too musical for me,
But though I cannot cope with you in song,
I would, in humble prose, inquire of you,
If that you will permit me to acquit
Even with the barber's pence the barber's service ?
[*They shake their heads.*

Or if there is aught else that I can do for you,
Sweet Master Owlspiegle, or your loving child,
The hopeful Cockle'moy ?

Cockl. Sir, you have been trimm'd of late,
Smooth's your chin, and bald your pate ;
Lest cold rheums should work you harm,
Here's a cap to keep you warm.

Gul. Welcome, as Fortunatus' wishing cap,
For 'twas a cap that I was wishing for.
(There I was quaint in spite of mortal terror.)

[*As he puts on the cap, a pair of ass's ears disengage themselves.*

Upon my faith, it is a dainty head-dress,
And might become an alderman !—

Thanks, sweet Monsieur,
Thou'rt a considerate youth.

Both Goblins bow with ceremony to GULLCRAMMER, who returns their salutation. OWLSPIEGLE descends by the trap-door. COCKLEDEMOY springs out at window.

SONG (*without*).

Owls. Cockledemony, my hope, my care,
Where art thou now, O tell me where ?

Cockl. Up in the sky,
On the bonny dragonfly,
Come, father, come you too—
She has four wings and strength enow,
And her long body has room for two.

Gul. Cockledemoy now is a naughty brat—
Would have the poor old stiff-rump'd devil his father,
Peril his fiendish neck. All boys are thoughtless.

SONG.

Owls. Which way didst thou take ?
Cockl. I have fallen in the lake—
Help, father, for Beëlzebub's sake.

Gul. The imp is drown'd—a strange death for a
devil !
O, may all boys take warning, and be civil ;
Respect their loving sires, endure a chiding,
Nor roam by night on dragonflies a-riding.

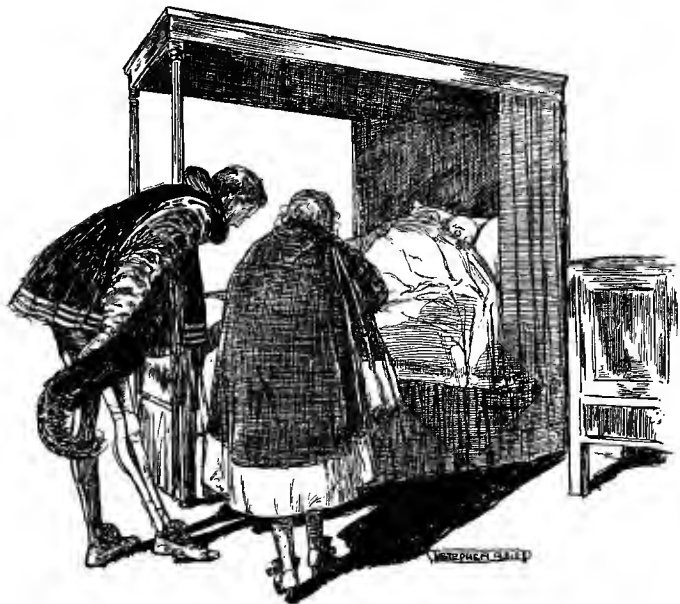
Cockl. (sings) Now merrily, merrily, row I to shore,
My bark is a bean-shell, a straw for an oar.

Owls. (sing) My life, my joy,
My Cockledemoy !

Gul. I can bear this no longer—thus children are
spoil'd.
(*Strikes into the tune*)—Master Owlspiegle, hoy !
He deserves to be whipp'd, little Cockledemoy !
[*Their voices are heard, as if dying away.*]

Gul. They're gone !—Now, am I scared, or am I not ?
I think the very desperate ecstasy
Of fear has given me courage. This is strange, now !
When they were here, I was not half so frighten'd
As now they're gone—they were a sort of company.
What a strange thing is use !—A horn, a claw,
The tip of a fiend's tail, was wont to scare me ;—
Now am I with the devil hand and glove ;
His soap has lather'd, and his razor shaved me ;
I've join'd him in a catch, kept time and tune,
Could dine with him, nor ask for a long spoon ;
And if I keep not better company,
What will become of me when I shall die ? [Exit.

SIR WALTER SCOTT



WITCHES' CAULDRONS AND BLASTED HEATHS

*Little boys and girls, will you come and ride
With me on my broomstick, far and wide,
First round the sun, then round the moon,
And we'll light on the steeple to hear a merry tune.*

KATE GREENAWAY



THE THREE WITCHES.

SCENE I. *An open Place.*

Thunder and Lightning. Enter three WITCHES.

1 *WITCH.* When shall we three meet again,
In thunder, lightning, or in rain?

2 *Witch.* When the hurlyburly's done,
When the battle's lost and won.

3 *Witch.* That will be ere the set of sun.

1 *Witch.* Where the place?

2 *Witch.* Upon the heath.

3 *Witch.* There to meet with Macbeth.

1 *Witch.* I come, Graymalkin!

All. Paddock calls:—Anon!

Fair is foul, and foul is fair:

Hover through the fog and filthy air. [*WITCHES vanish.*]

SCENE III. *A Heath.*

Thunder. Enter the three WITCHES.

1 *Witch.* Where hast thou been, sister?

2 *Witch.* Killing swine.

3 *Witch.* Sister, where thou?

1 *Witch.* A sailor's wife had chestnuts in her lap,
And munch'd, and munch'd, and munch'd:—"Give me,"
quoth I:—

"Aroint thee, witch!" the rump-fed ronyon cries.
Her husband's to Aleppo gone, master o' the Tiger;
But in a sieve I'll thither sail,
And, like a rat without a tail,

I'll do, I'll do, and I'll do.

2 *Witch.* I'll give thee a wind.

1 *Witch.* Thou art kind.

3 *Witch.* And I another.

1 *Witch.* I myself have all the other ;

And the very ports they blow,
All the quarters that they know
I' the shipman's card.

I'll drain him dry as hay :
Sleep shall neither night nor day
Hang upon his pent-house lid ;
He shall live a man forbid :
Weary sev'n-nights, nine times nine,
Shall we dwindle, peak, and pine :
Though his bark cannot be lost,
Yet it shall be tempest-toss'd.

Look what I have.

2 *Witch.* Show me, show me.

1 *Witch.* Here I have a pilot's thumb,
Wreck'd as homeward he did come. [*Drums within.*]

3 *Witch.* A drum, a drum !

Macbeth doth come.

All. The weird sisters, hand in hand,
Posters of the sea and land,
Thus do go about, about ;
Thrice to thine, and thrice to mine,
And thrice again, to make up nine :—
Peace !—the charm's wound up.

Enter MACBETH and BANQUO.

Macb. So foul and fair a day I have not seen.

Ban. How far is't call'd to Forres ?—What are these,
So wither'd, and so wild in their attire,

That look not like th' inhabitants o' the earth,
And yet are on't ?—Live you ? or are ye aught
That man may question ? You seem to understand me,
By each at once her choppy finger laying
Upon her skinny lips :—You should be women,
And yet your beards forbid me to interpret
That you are so.

Macb. Speak, if you can :—what are you ?

1 *Witch.* All hail, Macbeth ! hail to thee, thane of Glamis !

2 *Witch.* All hail, Macbeth ! hail to thee, thane of Cawdor.

3 *Witch.* All hail, Macbeth ! that shalt be king hereafter.

Ban. Good sir, why do you start and seem to fear
Things that do sound so fair ?—I' the name of truth,
Are ye fantastical, or that indeed
Which outwardly ye show ! My noble partner
You greet with present grace, and great prediction
Of noble having, and of royal hope,
That he seems rapt withal : to me you speak not :
If you can look into the seeds of time,
And say which grain will grow, and which will not.
Speak then to me, who neither beg, nor fear,
Your favours, nor your hate.

1 *Witch.* Hail !

2 *Witch.* Hail !

3 *Witch.* Hail !

1 *Witch.* Lesser than Macbeth, and greater.

2 *Witch.* Not so happy, yet much happier.

3 *Witch.* Thou shalt get kings, though thou be none ;

So, all hail, Macbeth and Banquo !

1 *Witch.* Banquo and Macbeth, all hail !

Macb. Stay, you imperfect speakers, tell me more :
By Sinel's death, I know, I am thane of Glamis ;
But how of Cawdor ? the thane of Cawdor lives,
A prosperous gentleman ; and to be king
Stands not within the prospect of belief,
No more than to be Cawdor. Say, from whence
You owe this strange intelligence ; or why
Upon this blasted heath you stop our way
With such prophetic greeting :—speak, I charge you.

[WITCHES *vanish.*

Ban. The earth hath bubbles, as the water has,
And these are of them : whither are they vanish'd ?

Macb. Into the air ; and what seemed corporal,
melted

As breath into the wind.—'Would they had stay'd !

Ban. Were such things here as we do speak about ?
Or have we eaten of the insane root,
That takes the reason prisoner ?

Macb. Your children shall be kings.

Ban. You shall be king.

Macb. And thane of Cawdor too : went it not so ?

Ban. To the self-same tune and words. Who's here ?

ACT III. SCENE IV

*The Ghost of BANQUO appears, and sits in
MACBETH's place.*

Macb. Here had we now our country's honour roof'd,
Were the grac'd person of our Banquo present ;

Who may I rather challenge for unkindness,
Than pity for mischance !

Rosse. His absence, sir,
Lays blame upon his promise. Please it your highness
To grace us with your royal company ?

Macb. The table's full.

Len. Here is a place reserv'd, sir.

Macb. Where ?

Len. Here, my good lord. What is't that moves your
highness ?

Macb. Which of you have done this ?

Lords. What, my good lord ?

Macb. Thou canst not say I did it : never shake
Thy gory locks at me.

Rosse. Gentlemen, rise ; his highness is not well.

Lady M. Sit, worthy friends :—my lord is often
thus,

And hath been from his youth : pray you, keep seat ;
The fit is momentary ; upon a thought
He will again be well : if much you note him,
You shall offend him, and extend his passion :
Feed, and regard him not.—Are you a man ?

Macb. Ay, and a bold one, that dare look on that
Which might appal the devil.

Lady M. O proper stuff !

This is the very painting of your fear :
This is the air-drawn dagger, which, you said,
Led you to Duncan. O, these flaws and starts
(Impostors to true fear) would well become
A woman's story at a winter's fire,
Authoriz'd by her grandam. Shame itself !
Why do you make such faces ? When all's done,
You look but on a stool.

Macb. Pr'ythee, see there ! behold ! look ! lo ! how
say you ?—

Why, what care I ? If thou canst nod, speak too.
If charnel-houses, and our graves, must send
Those that we bury back, our monuments
Shall be the maws of kites. [GHOST *disappears.*

Lady M. What, quite unmann'd in folly ?

Macb. If I stand here, I saw him.

Lady M. Fie, for shame.

Macb. Blood hath been shed ere now, i' th' olden
time,

Ere humane statute purg'd the gentle weal ;
Ay, and since too, murders have been perform'd
Too terrible for the ear : the times have been,
That, when the brains were out, the man would die,
And there an end ; but now, they rise again,
With twenty mortal murders on their crowns,
And push us from our stools : this is more strange
Than such a murder is.

Lady M. My worthy lord,
Your noble friends do lack you.

Macb. I do forget :
Do not muse at me, my most worthy friends ;
I have a strange infirmity, which is nothing
To those that know me. Come, love and health to all ;
Then, I'll sit down.—Give me some wine, fill full.

GHOST *re-appears.*

I drink to the general joy of the whole table,
And to our dear friend Banquo, whom we miss ;
Would he were here ! to all, and him, we thirst,
And all to all.

Lords. Our duties, and the pledge.

Macb. Avaunt ! and quit my sight ! Let the earth
hide thee !

Thy bones are marrowless, thy blood is cold ;
Thou hast no speculation in those eyes
Which thou dost glare with.

Lady M. Think of this, good peers,
But as a thing of custom : 'tis no other,
Only it spoils the pleasure of the time.

Macb. What man dare, I dare :
Approach thou like the ragged Russian bear,
The arm'd rhinoceros, or the Hyrcan tiger ;
Take any shape but that, and my firm nerves
Shall never tremble : or be alive again,
And dare me to the desert with thy sword ;
If trembling I inhibit thee, protest me
The baby of a girl. Hence, horrible shadow !
Unreal mockery, hence !— [GHOST *disappears*.

Why so ;—being gone,
I am a man again.—Pray you, sit still.

Lady M. You have displac'd the mirth, broke the
good meeting,
With most admir'd disorder.

Macb. Can such things be,
And overcome us like a summer's cloud,
Without our special wonder ? You make me strange
Even to the disposition that I owe,
When now I think you can behold such sights,
And keep the natural ruby of your cheeks,
When mine are blanch'd with fear.

Rosse. What sights, my lord ?

Lady M. I pray you, speak not ; he grows worse
and worse ;
Question enrages him : at once, good night :—

Stand not upon the order of your going,
But go at once.

Len. Good night ; and better health
Attend his majesty !

Lady M. A kind good night to all !

[*Exeunt all except MACBETH and LADY MACBETH.*]

Macb. It will have blood ; they say, blood will have blood :

Stones have been known to move, and trees to speak ;
Augurs, and understood relations, have
By magot-pies, and choughs, and rooks, brought forth
The secret'st man of blood.—What is the night ?

Lady M. Almost at odds with morning, which is
which.

Macb. How say'st thou, that Macduff denies his person
At our great bidding ?

Lady M. Did you send to him, sir ?

Macb. I hear it by the way ; but I will send :
There's not a one of them, but in his house
I keep a servant fee'd. I will to-morrow
(And betimes I will) to the weird sisters :
More shall they speak ; for now I am bent to know,
By the worst means, the worst. For mine own good,
All causes shall give way : I am in blood
Stept in so far, that, should I wade no more,
Returning were as tedious as go o'er :
Strange things I have in head, that will to hand ;
Which must be acted ere they may be scann'd.

Lady M. You lack the season of all natures, sleep.

Macb. Come, we'll to sleep. My strange and self
abuse

Is the initiate fear, that-wants hard use :—
We are yet but young in deed.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE V. *The Heath.*

Thunder. Enter HECATE meeting the three WITCHES.

1 *Witch.* Why, how now, Hecate ? you look angrily.

Hec. Have I not reason, beldams as you are,
Saucy and overbold ? How did you dare
To trade and traffic with Macbeth,
In riddles, and affairs of death ;
And I, the mistress of your charms,
The close contriver of all harms,
Was never call'd to bear my part,
Or show the glory of our art ?
And, which is worse, all you have done
Hath been but for a wayward son,
Spiteful and wrathful ; who, as others do,
Loves for his own ends, not for you.
But make amends now : get you gone,
And at the pit of Acheron
Meet me i' the morning : thither he
Will come to know his destiny :
Your vessels and your spells provide,
Your charms, and everything beside,
I am for the air ; this night I'll spend
Unto a dismal and a fatal end ;
Great business must be wrought ere noon :
Upon the corner of the moon
There hangs a vaporous drop profound ;
I'll catch it ere it come to ground :

And that, distill'd by magic sleights,
Shall raise such artificial sprites,
As, by the strength of their illusion,
Shall draw him on to his confusion :
He shall spurn fate, scorn death, and bear
His hopes 'bove wisdom, grace, and fear :
And, you all know, security
Is mortals' chiefest enemy.

Song within, "Come away, come away," etc.

Hark ! I am call'd ; my little spirit, see,
Sits in a foggy cloud, and stays for me. [Exit.

1 *Witch.* Come, let's make haste ; she'll soon be
back again. [Exeunt.

ACT IV.

SCENE I. *A dark Cave. In the middle, a cauldron
boiling.*

Thunder. Enter the three WITCHES.

1 *Witch.* Thrice the brinded cat hath mew'd.

2 *Witch.* Thrice ; and once the hedge-pig whin'd.

3 *Witch.* Harpier cries :—'tis time, 'tis time.

1 *Witch.* Round about the cauldron go ;
In the poison'd entrails throw.

Toad, that under cold stone,
Days and nights hast thirty-one

Swelter'd venom sleeping got,
Boil thou first i' the charmed pot.

All. Double, double toil and trouble ;
Fire, burn ; and, cauldron, bubble.

2 *Witch.* Fillet of a fenny snake,
In the cauldron boil and bake ;
Eye of newt, and toe of frog,
Wool of bat, and tongue of dog,
Adder's fork, and blind-worm's sting,
Lizard's leg, and owlet's wing,
For a charm of powerful trouble,
Like a hell-broth boil and bubble.

All. Double, double toil and trouble ;
Fire, burn ; and, cauldron, bubble.

3 *Witch.* Scale of dragon ; tooth of wolf ;
Witches' mummy ; maw and gulf
Of the ravin'd salt-sea shark ;
Root of hemlock, digg'd i' the dark ;
Liver of blaspheming Jew ;
Gall of goat ; and slips of yew
Sliver'd in the moon's eclipse ;
Nose of Turk ; and Tartar's lips ;
Finger of birth-strangled babe,
Ditch-delivered by a drab,
Make the gruel thick and slab :
And thereto a tiger's chaudron,
For the ingredients of our cauldron.

All. Double, double toil and trouble ;
Fire, burn ; and, cauldron, bubble.

2 *Witch.* Cool it with a baboon's blood ;
Then the charm is firm and good.

Enter HECATE.

Hec. O, well done! I commend your pains,
And every one shall share i' the gains.
And now about the cauldron sing,
Like elves and fairies in a ring,
Enchanting all that you put in.

[*Music and a song, "Black Spirits," etc. Exit*
HECATE.

2 *Witch.* By the pricking of my thumbs,
Something wicked this way comes :
Open, locks, whoever knocks.

Enter MACBETH.

Macb. How now, you secret, black, and midnight hags,
What is't you do ?

All. A deed without a name.

Macb. I conjure you, by that which you profess,
(Howe'er you come to know it,) answer me :
Though you untie the winds, and let them fight
Against the churches ; though the yesty waves
Confound and swallow navigation up ;
Though bladed corn be lodg'd, and trees blown down ;
Though castles topple on their warders' heads ;
Though palaces and pyramids do slope
Their heads to their foundations ; though the treasure
Of nature's germins tumble all together,
Even till destruction sicken, answer me
To what I ask you.

1 *Witch.* Speak.

2 *Witch.* Demand.

3 *Witch.* We'll answer.

I *Witch*. Say if thou'dst rather hear it from our mouth,
Or from our masters ?

Macb. Call them : let me see them.

I *Witch*. Pour in sow's blood, that hath eaten
Her nine farrow ; grease, that's sweaten
From the murderer's gibbet, throw
Into the flame.

All. Come, high or low ;
Thyself and office deftly show.

Thunder. An APPARITION of an armed head rises.

Macb. Tell me, thou unknown power,—

I *Witch.* He knows thy thought :
Hear his speech, but say thou nought.

App. Macbeth ! Macbeth ! Macbeth ! beware Macduff :
Beware the thane of Fife.—Dismiss me :—enough.

[*Descends.*

Macb. Whate'er thou art, for thy good caution,
thanks ;

Thou hast harp'd my fear aright : but one word more :—

I *Witch.* He will not be commanded : here's another,
More potent than the first.

Thunder. An APPARITION of a bloody child rises.

App. Macbeth ! Macbeth ! Macbeth !—

Macb. Had I three ears, I'd hear thee.

App. Be bloody, bold, and resolute ; laugh to scorn
The power of man, for none of woman born
Shall harm Macbeth.

[*Descends.*

Macb. Then live, Macduff : what need I fear of thee ?
But yet I'll make assurance double sure,

And take a bond of fate : thou shalt not live ;
That I may tell pale-hearted fear it lies,
And sleep in spite of thunder. What is this,

*Thunder. An APPARITION of a child crowned, with a tree
in his hand, rises.*

That rises like the issue of a king,
And wears upon his baby brow the round
And top of sovereignty ?

All. Listen, but speak not to't.

App. Be lion-mettled, proud ; and take no care
Who chafes, who frets, or where conspirors are :
Macbeth shall never vanquish'd be, until
Great Birnam wood to high Dunsinane hill
Shall come against him. [*Descends.*]

Macb. That will never be :
Who can impress the forest ; bid the tree
Unfix his earth-bound root ? sweet bodements ! good !
Rebellious head, rise never, till the wood
Of Birnam rise, and our high-plac'd Macbeth
Shall live the least of nature, pay his breath
To time and mortal custom.—Yet my heart
Throbs to know one thing : tell me, (if your art
Can tell so much,) shall Banquo's issue ever
Reign in this kingdom ?

All. Seek to know no more.

Macb. I will be satisfied : deny me this,
And an eternal curse fall on you ! Let me know :—
Why sinks that cauldron ? and what noise is this

1 *Witch.* Show ! [*Hautboys.*]

2 *Witch.* Show !

3 *Witch.* Show !

All. Show his eyes, and grieve his heart ;
Come like shadows, so depart.

*Eight kings appear, and pass in order ; the last with a
glass in his hand : BANQUO following.*

Macb. Thou art too like the spirit of Banquo ;
down !

Thy crown does sear mine eyeballs :—and thy hair,
Thou other gold-bound brow, is like the first :—
A third is like the former.—Filthy hags !
Why do you show me this ?—A fourth ?—Start, eyes !—
What, will the line stretch out to the crack of doom ?—
Another yet ?—A seventh ?—I'll see no more :—
And yet the eighth appears, who bears a glass,
Which shows me many more ; and some I see,
That two-fold balls and treble sceptres carry ;
Horrible sight !—Now, I see, 'tis true ;
For the blood-bolter'd Banquo smiles upon me,
And points at them for his.—What, is this so ?

I Witch. Ay, sir, all this is so : but why
Stands Macbeth thus amazedly ?
Come, sisters, cheer we up his sprites,
And show the best of our delights :
I'll charm the air to give a sound,
While you perform your antique round ;
That this great king may kindly say,
Our duties did his welcome pay.

[*Music.* The WITCHES dance, and then vanish.

Macb. Where are they? Gone?—Let this pernicious
hour
Stand aye accurs'd in the calendar !—
Come in ! without there !

Enter LENOX.

Len. What's your grace's will ?

Macb. Saw you the weird sisters ?

Len. No, my lord.

Macb. Came they not by you !

Len. No, indeed, my lord.

Macb. Infected be the air whereon they ride ;
And damn'd all those that trust them !—I did hear
The galloping of horse : who was't came by ?

SHAKESPEARE

THE BANSHEE

GREEN, in the wizard arms
Of the foam-bearded Atlantic,
An isle of old enchantment,
A melancholy isle
Enchanted and dreaming lies :
And there, by Shannon's flowing,
In the moonlight, spectre-thin,
The spectre Erin sits.

An aged desolation,
She sits by old Shannon's flowing,
A mother of many children,
Of children exiled and dead,
In her home, with bent head, homeless,
Clasping her knees she sits,
Keening, keening !

And at her keene the fairy-grass
Trembles on dun and barrow ;
Around the foot of her ancient crosses
The grave-grass shakes and the nettle swings ;
In haunted glens the meadow-sweet
Flings to the night wind
Her mystic mournful perfume ;
The sad spearmint by holy wells
Breathes melancholy balm.

Sometimes she lifts her head,
With blue eyes tearless,
And gazes athwart the reck of night
Upon things long past,
Upon things to come.

And sometimes, when the moon
Brings tempest upon the deep,
And roused Atlantic thunders from his cavern in the west,
The wolfhound at her feet
Springs up with a mighty bay,
And chords of mystery sound from the wild harp at her
side,
Strung from the heart of poets ;
And she flies on the wings of tempest
Around her shuddering isle,
With grey hair streaming :
A meteor of evil omen,
The spectre of hope forlorn,
Keening, keening !

She keenes, and the strings of her wild harp shiver
On the gusts of night :
O'er the four waters she keenes—over Moyle she keenes,
O'er the Sea of Milith, and the Strait of Strongbow,
And the Ocean of Columbus.

And the Fianna hear, and the ghost of her cloudy hover-
ing heroes ;
And the swan, Fianoula, wails o'er the waters of Inisfail,
Chanting her song of destiny,
The rune of the weaving Fates.

And the nations hear in the void and quaking time of
night,
Sad unto dawning, dirges,
Solemn dirges,
And snatches of bardic song ;
Their souls quake in the void and quaking time of night,
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And they dream of the weird of kings,
And tyrannies moulting, sick
In the dreadful wind of change.

Wail no more, lonely one, mother of exiles wail no more,
Banshee of the world—no more !
Thy sorrows are the world's, thou art no more alone ;
Thy wrongs, the world's.

JOHN TODHUNTER



THE WITCHES' DANCE OF DEATH, 1815

I

NIGHT and morning were at meeting
Over Waterloo ;
Cocks had sung their earliest greeting ;
Faint and low they crew,
For no paly beam yet shone
On the heights of Mount Saint John ;
Tempest-clouds prolong'd the sway
Of timeless darkness over day ;
Whirlwind, thunder-clap, and shower,
Mark'd it a predestined hour.
Broad and frequent through the night
Flash'd the sheets of levin-light ;
Muskets, glancing lightnings back,
Show'd the dreary bivouac
Where the soldier lay
Chill and stiff, and drench'd with rain,
Wishing dawn of morn again,
Though death should come with day.

II

'Tis at such a tide and hour,
Wizard, witch and fiend have power,
And ghastly forms through mist and shower
Gleam on the gifted ken ;
And then the affrighted prophet's ear
Drinks whispers strange of fate and fear
Presaging death and ruin near
Among the sons of men :—
Apart from Albyn's war array,
Twas then gray Allan sleepless lay ;
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Gray Allan, who, for many a day,
Had follow'd stout and stern,
Where, through battle's rout and reel,
Storm of shot and hedge of steel,
Led the grandson of Lochiel,
Valiant Fassiefern.
Through steel and shot he leads no more,
Low laid 'mid friends' and foemen's gore—
But long his native lake's wild shore,
And Sunart rough and high Ardgower,
And Morven long shall tell,
And proud Bennevis hear with awe,
How, upon bloody Quatre-Bras,
Brave Cameron heard the wild hurra
Of conquest as he fell.

III

'Lone on the outskirts of the host,
The weary sentinel held post,
And heard, through darkness far aloof,
The frequent clang of courser's hoof,
Where held the cloak'd patrol their course,
And spurr'd 'gainst storm the swerving horse ;
But there are sounds in Allan's ear,
Patrol nor sentinel may hear,
And sights before his eye aghast
Invisible to them have pass'd,
When down the destined plain,
'Twixt Britain and the bands of France,
Wild as marsh-born meteor's glance,
Strange phantoms wheel'd a revel dance,
And doom'd the future slain.—
Such forms were seen, such sounds were heard,
When Scotland's James his march prepared
For Flodden's fatal plain ;

Such, when he drew his ruthless sword,
As Choosers of the Slain, adored
The yet unchristen'd Dane.
An indistinct and phantom band,
They wheel'd their ring-dance hand in hand,
With gestures wild and dread ;
The Seer, who watch'd them ride the storm,
Saw through their faint and shadowy form
The lightning's flash more red ;
And still their ghastly roundelay
Was of the coming battle-fray,
And of the destined dead.

IV

SONG

Wheel the wild dance
While lightnings glance,
And thunders rattle loud,
And call the brave
To bloody grave,
To sleep without a shroud.

Our airy feet,
So light and fleet,
They do not bend the rye
That sinks its head when whirlwinds rave,
And swells again in eddying wave,
As each wild gust blows by ;
But still the corn,
At dawn of morn,
Our fatal steps that bore,

At eve lies waste,
A trampled paste
Of blackening mud and gore.

V

Wheel the wild dance
While lightnings glance,
And thunders rattle loud,
And call the brave,
To bloody grave,
To sleep without a shroud.

Wheel the wild dance !
Brave sons of France,
For you our ring makes room ;
Make space full wide
For martial pride,
For banner, spear, and plume.
Approach, draw near,
Proud Cuirassier !
Room for the men of steel !
Through crest and plate
The broadsword's weight
Both head and heart shall feel.

VI

Wheel the wild dance !
While lightnings glance,
And thunders rattle loud,
And call the brave
To bloody grave,
To sleep without a shroud.

N

Sons of the Spear !
You feel us near
 In many a ghastly dream ;
With fancy's eye
Our forms you spy,
 And hear our fatal scream.
With clearer sight
Ere falls the night,
 Just when to weal or woe
Your disembodied souls take flight
On trembling wing—each startled sprite
 Our choir of death shall know.

VII

Wheel the wild dance
While lightnings glance,
 And thunders rattle loud,
And call the brave
To bloody grave,
 To sleep without a shroud.

Burst, ye clouds, in tempest showers,
Redder rain shall soon be ours—
 See the east grows wan—
Yield we place to sterner game,
Ere deadlier bolts and direr flame
Shall the welkin's thunders shame ;
Elemental rage is tame
 To the wrath of man.

VIII

At morn, gray Allan's mates with awe
 Heard of the vision'd sights he saw,
 The legend heard him say ;
 But the Seer's gifted eye was dim,
 Deafen'd his ear, and stark his limb,
 Ere closed that bloody day—
 He sleeps far from his Highland heath,—
 But often of the Dance of Death
 His comrades tell the tale,
 On picquet-post, when ebbs the night,
 And waning watch-fires glow less bright,
 And dawn is glimmering pale.

SIR WALTER SCOTT

A CHARM-SONG

BLACK spirits and white, red spirits and gray,
Mingle, mingle, mingle, you that mingle may.

Titty, Tiffin,
Keep it stiff in ;
Firedrake, Puckey,
Make it lucky ;
Liard, Robin,
You must bob in.

Round, around, around, about, about !
All ill come running in, all good keep out !

1 *Witch*. Here's the blood of a bat.

Hecate. Put in that, O put in that !

2 *Witch*. Here's libbard's bane.

Hecate. Put in again !

1 *Witch*. The juice of toad, the oil of adder ;

2 *Witch*. Those will make the younker madder.

Hecate. Put in—there's all—and rid the stench.

Firestone. Nay, here's three ounces of the red-haired
wench.

All. Round, around, around, about, about !

T. MIDDLETON

THE WITCHES' SABBATH

1 *CHARM.* Dame, dame ! the watch is set :

Quickly come, we all are met.
From the lakes and from the fens,
From the rocks and from the dens,
From the woods and from the caves,
From the churchyards, from the graves,
From the dungeon, from the tree,
That they die on, here are we !

[Comes she not yet ?
Strike another heat !]

2 *Charm.* The weather is fair, the wind is good :

Up, dame, on your horse of wood !
Or else tuck up your grey frock,
And saddle your goat or your green cock,
And make his bridle a bottom * of thread
To roll up how many miles you have rid.
Quickly come away,
For we all stay.

[Nor yet ? Nay then
We'll try her again.]

3 *Charm.* The owl is abroad, the bat and the toad,
And so is the cat-a-mountain ; †
The ant and the mole sit both in a hole,
And the frog peeps out o' the fountain.
The dogs they do bay, and the timbrels play,
The spindle is now a-turning ;
The moon it is red, and the stars are fled,
But all the sky is a-burning :

* Ball of thread.

† Wild cat.

The ditch is made, and our nails the spade,
With pictures full, of wax and wool :
Their livers I stick with needles quick ;
There lacks but the blood to make up the flood.
Quickly, dame, then bring your part in !
Spur, spur upon little Martin !
Merrily, merrily, make him sail,
A worm in his mouth and a thorn in his tail.
Fire above, and fire below,
With a whip in your hand to make him go !
[O now she's come !
Let all be dumb.]

BEN JONSON



THE KELPY

ON TWEED RIVER

I

MERRILY swim we, the moon shines bright,
Both current and ripple are dancing in light.
We have roused the night raven, I heard him croak,
As we plashed along beneath the oak
That flings its broad branches so far and so wide,
Their shadows are dancing in midst of the tide.
“Who wakens my nestlings?” the raven, he said,
“My beak shall ere morn in his blood be red!
For a blue swollen corpse is a dainty meal,
And I’ll have my share with the pike and the eel.”

II

Merrily swim we, the moon shines bright,
There’s a golden gleam on the distant height :
There’s a silver shower on the alders dank,
And the drooping willows that wave on the bank.
I see the Abbey, both turret and tower,
It is all astir for the vesper hour ;
The Monks for the chapel are leaving each cell,
But where’s Father Philip should toll the bell !

III

Merrily swim we, the moon shines bright,
Downward we drift through shadow and light ;
Under yon rock the eddies sleep,
Calm and silent, dark and deep.
The Kelpy has risen from the fathomless pool,
He has lighted his candle of death and of dool :

Look, Father, look, and you'll laugh to see
How he gapes and glares with his eyes on thee !

IV

Good luck to your fishing, whom watch ye to-night ?
A man of mean or a man of might ?
Is it layman or priest that must float in your cove,
Or lover who crosses to visit his love ?
Hark ! heard ye the Kelpy reply as we pass'd,—
“God's blessing on the warder, he lock'd the bridge fast !
All that come to my cove are sunk,
Priest or layman, lover or monk.”

Landed—landed ! the black book hath won,
Else had you seen Berwick with morning sun !
Sain ye, and save ye, and blithe mot ye be,
For seldom they land that go swimming with me.

TO THE SUB-PRIOR

Good evening, Sir Priest, and so late as you ride,
With your mule so fair, and your mantle so wide ;
But ride you through valley, or ride you o'er hill,
There is one that has warrant to wait on you still.

Back, back,

The volume black !

I have a warrant to carry it back.

What, ho ! Sub-Prior, and came you but here
To conjure a book from a dead woman's bier ?

Sain you, and save you, be wary and wise,
Ride back with the book, or you'll pay for your prize.

Back, back,

There's death in the track !

In the name of my master, I bid thee bear back.

"In the name of MY Master," said the astonished Monk, "that name before which all things created tremble, I conjure thee to say what thou art that hauntest me thus ?"

The same voice replied,—

That which is neither ill nor well,

That which belongs not to heaven nor to hell.

A wreath of the mist, a bubble of the stream,

'Twixt a waking thought and a sleeping dream ;

A form that men spy

With the half-shut eye

In the beams of the setting sun, am I.

Vainly, Sir Prior, wouldst thou bar me my right !

Like the star when it shoots, I can dart through the
night ;

I can dance on the torrent, and ride on the air,

And travel the world with the bonny night-mare.

Again, again,

At the crook of the glen,

Where bickers the burnie, I'll meet thee again.

SIR WALTER SCOTT

HECATE AND THE WITCHES

VOICES above. Come away, come away,
Hecate, Hecate, come away.

Hecate. I come, I come, I come, I come,
With all the speed I may,
With all the speed I may.
Where's Stadlin?

Voice above. Here.

Hecate. Where's Puckle?

Voice above. Here,
And Hoppo too, and Hellwain too ;
We lack but you, we lack but you ;
Come away, make up the count.
Hecate. I will but 'noint, and then I mount.

[*A spirit like a cat descends.*

Voice above. There's one comes down to fetch his
dues,
A kiss, a call, a sip of blood ;
And why thou stayest so long
I muse, I muse,
Since the air's so sweet and good.

Hecate. O, art thou come?

What news, what news?

Spirit. All goes still to our delight :

Either come, or else

Refuse, refuse.

Hecate. Now I'm furnished for the flight.
Now I go, now I fly,
Malkin my sweet spirit and I,
O what a dainty pleasure 'tis
To ride in the air
When the moon shines fair,

And sing and dance, and toy and kiss,
Over woods, high rocks, and mountains,
Over seas, our mistress' fountains,
Over steeples, towers, and turrets,
We fly by night, 'mongst troops of spirits :
No ring of bells to our ears sounds,
No howl of wolves, no yelps of hounds ;
No, not the noise of water's breach,
Or cannon's throat our height can reach.

THOMAS MIDDLETON



TAM O' SHANTER—A TALE

"Of Brownie and of Bogillie full is this Buke."

GAWIN DOUGLAS.

WHEN chapman billies leave the street,
And drouthy neibors neibors meet ;
As market days are wearing late,
And folk begin to tak the gate,
While we sit bousing at the nappy,
An' getting fou and unco happy,
We think na on the lang Scots miles,
The mosses, waters, slaps and stiles,
That lie between us and our hame,
Where sits our sulky, sullen dame,
Gathering her brows like gathering storm,
Nursing her wrath to keep it warm.

This truth fand honest Tam o' Shanter,
As he frae Ayr ae night did canter :
(Auld Ayr, wham ne'er a town surpasses,
For honest men and bonie lasses.)

O Tain ! had'st thou but been sae wise,
As taen thy ain wife Kate's advice !
She tauld thee weel thou was a skellum,
A blethering, blustering, drunken blellum ;
That frae November till October,
Ae market-day thou was na sober ;
That ilka melder wi' the Miller,
Thou sat as lang as thou had siller ;
That ev'ry naig was ca'd a shoe on
The smith and thee gat roarin fou on ?

That at the Lord's house, ev'n on Sunday,
Thou drank wi' Kirkton Jean till Monday ;
She prophesied that late or soon,
Thou wad be found, deep drown'd in Doon,
Or catch'd wi' warlocks in the mirk,
By Alloway's auld, haunted kirk.

Ah, gentle dames ! it gars me greet,
To think how mony counsels sweet,
How mony lengthen'd, sage advices,
The husband frae the wife despises !

But to our tale :—Ae market night,
Tam had got planted unco right,
Fast by an ingle, bleezing finely,
Wi' reaming swats that drank divinely ;
And at his elbow, Souter Johnie,
His ancient, trusty, drouthy crony :
Tam lo'ed him like a very brither ;
They had been fou for weeks thegither.
The night drave on wi' sangs an' clatter ;
And aye the ale was growing better :
The Landlady and Tam grew gracious,
Wi' favours secret, sweet and precious :
The Souter tauld his queerest stories ;
The Landlord's laugh was ready chorus :
The storm without might rair and rustle,
Tam did na mind the storm a whistle.

Care, mad to see a man sae happy,
E'en drown'd himsel amang the nappy.
As bees flee hame wi' lades o' treasure,
The minutes wing'd their way wi' pleasure :

Kings may be blest, but Tam was glorious,
O'er a' the ills o' life victorious !

But pleasures are like poppies spread,
You seize the flow'r, its bloom is shed ;
Or like the snow falls in the river,
A moment white—then melts for ever ;
Or like the Borealis race,
That flit ere you can point their place ;
Or like the Rainbow's lovely form
Evanishing amid the storm.—
Nae man can tether Time nor Tide,
The hour approaches Tam maun ride ;
That hour, o' night's black arch the key-stane,
That dreary hour he mounts his beast in ;
And sic a night he tak's the road in,
As ne'er poor sinner was abroad in.

The wind blew as 'twad blawn its last ;
The rattling showers rose on the blast ;
The speedy gleams the darkness swallow'd ;
Loud, deep, and lang the thunder bellow'd :
That night, a child might understand,
The deil had business on his hand.

Weel-mounted on his grey mare Meg,
A better never lifted leg,
Tam skelpit on thro' dub and mire,
Despising wind, and rain, and fire ;
Whiles holding fast his gude blue bonnet,
Whiles crooning o'er some auld Scots sonnet,
Whiles glow'rin round wi' prudent cares,
Lest bogles catch him unawares ;

Kirk-Alloway was drawing nigh,
Where ghaists and houlets nightly cry.

By this time he was cross the ford,
Where in the snaw the chapman smoor'd ;
And past the birks and meikle stane,
Where drunken Charlie brak's neck-bane ;
And thro' the whins, and by the cairn,
Where hunters fand the murder'd bairn ;
And near the thorn, aboon the well,
Where Mungo's mither hang'd hersel'.
Before him Doon pours all his floods,
The doubling storm roars thro' the woods,
The lightnings flash from pole to pole,
Near and more near the thunders roll,
When, glimmering thro' the groaning trees,
Kirk-Alloway seem'd in a bleeze,
Thro' ilka bore the beams were glancing,
And loud resounded mirth and dancing.

Inspiring bold John Barleycorn !
What dangers thou canst make us scorn !
Wi' tippenny, we fear nae evil ;
Wi' usquabae, we'll face the devil !
The swats sae ream'd in Tammie's noddle,
Fair play, he car'd na deils a boddle,
But Maggie stood, right sair astonish'd,
Till, by the heel and hand admonish'd,
She ventur'd forward on the light ;
And, wow ! Tam saw an unco sight !

Warlocks and witches in a dance :
Nae cotillon, brent new frae France,

But hornpipes, jigs, strathspeys, and reels,
Put life and mettle in their heels.
A winnock-bunker in the east,
There sat auld Nick, in shape o' beast ;
A tousie tyke, black, grim, and large,
To gie them music was his charge.
He screw'd the pipes and gart them skirl,
Till roof and rafters a' did dirl.—
Coffins stood round, like open presses,
That shaw'd the Dead in their last dresses ;
And (by some devilish cantraip sleight)
Each in its cauld hand held a light.
By which heroic Tam was able
To note upon the haly table,
A murderer's banes, in gibbet-airns ;
Twa span-lang, wee, unchristened bairns ;
A thief, new-cuttet frae a rape ;
Wi' his last gasp his gab did gape ;
Five tomahawks, wi' blude red-rusted :
Five scimitars, wi' murder crusted :
A garter which a babe had strangled :
A knife, a father's throat had mangled,
Whom his ain son of life bereft,
The grey hairs yet stack to the heft ;
Wi' mair of horrible and awfu',
Which even to name wad be unlawfu'.

As Tammie glowr'd, amaz'd, and curious,
The mirth and fun grew fast and furious ;
The Piper loud and louder blew,
The dancers quick and quicker flew,
They reel'd, they set, they cross'd, they cleekit,
Till ilka carlin swat and reekit,

And coost her duddies to the wark,
And linkit at it in her sark !

Now Tam, O Tam ! had they been queans,
A' plump and strapping in their teens !
Their sarks, instead o' creeshie flainen,
Been snaw-white seventeen-hunder linen !—
Thir breeks o' mine, my only pair,
That aince were plush, o' guid blue hair,
I wad hae gien them off my hurdies,
For ae blink o' the bonie burdies !
But wither'd beldams, auld and droll,
Rigwoodie hags wad spean a foal,
Louping an' flinging on a crummock,
I wonder did na turn thy stomach.

But Tam kent what was what fu' brawlie :
There was ae winsome wench and waulie
That night enlisted in the core,
Lang after ken'd on Carrick shore
(For mony a beast to dead she shot,
And perish'd mony a bonie boat,
And shook baith meikle corn and bear,
And kept the country-side in fear) ;
Her cutty sark, o' Paisley harn,
That while a lassie she had worn,
In longitude tho' sorely scanty,
It was her best, and she was vauntie.
Ah ! little ken'd thy reverend grannie,
That sark she coft for her wee Nannie,
Wi' twa pund Scots ('twas a' her riches),
Wad ever grac'd a dance of witches !

But here my Muse her wing maun cour,
Sic flights are far beyond her power ;
To sing how Nannie lap and flang
(A souple jade she was and strang),
And how Tam stood, like ane bewitch'd,
And thought his very een enrich'd :
Even Satan glowr'd, and fidg'd fu' fain,
And hotch'd and blew wi' might and main :
Till first ae caper, syne anither,
Tam tint his reason a' thegither,
And roars out, " Weel done, Cutty-sark ! "
And in an instant all was dark :
And scarcely had he Maggie rallied,
When out the hellish legion sallied.

As bees bizz out wi' angry fyke,
When plundering herds assail their byke ;
As open pussie's mortal foes,
When, pop ! she starts before their nose ;
As eager runs the market-crowd,
When " Catch the thief ! " resounds aloud ;
So Maggie runs, the witches follow,
Wi' mony an eldritch skreich and hollo.

Ah, Tam ! Ah Tam ! thou'll get thy fairin !
In hell they'll roast thee like a herrin !
In vain thy Kate awaits thy comin !
Kate soon will be a woefu' woman !
Now, do thy speedy utmost, Meg,
And win the key-stane o' the brig :
There, at them thou thy tail may toss,
A running stream they dare na cross.
But ere the key-stane she could make,

The fient a tail she had to shake !
For Nannie, far before the rest,
Hard upon noble Maggie prest,
And flew at Tam wi' furious ettle ;
But little wist she Maggie's mettle !
Ae spring brought off her master hale,
But left behind her ain grey tail :
The carlin claught her by the rump,
And left poor Maggie scarce a stump.

Now, wha this tale o' truth shall read,
Ilk man, and mother's son, take heed :
Whene'er to Drink you are inclin'd,
Or Cutty-sarks rin in your mind,
Think ye may buy the joys o'er dear ;
Remember Tam o' Shanter's mare.

ROBERT BURNS

TWIST YE, TWINE YE

TWIST ye, twine ye ! even so,
Mingle shades of joy and woe,
Hope, and fear, and peace, and strife,
In the thread of human life.

While the mystic twist is spinning,
And the infant's life beginning,
Dimly seen through twilight bending,
Lo, what varied shapes attending !

Passions wild, and follies vain,
Pleasures soon exchanged for pain ;
Doubt, and jealousy, and fear,
In the magic dance appear.

Now they wax, and now they dwindle,
Whirling with the whirling spindle.
Twist ye, twine ye ! even so,
Mingle human bliss and woe.

SIR WALTER SCOTT

COME UNTO THESE YELLOW
SANDS



*"Steer hither, steer your wingéd pines,
All-beaten mariners!"*

WILLIAM BROWNE

*"Here, in Shakespeare's vision, a flower of her kin
forsaken,
Lay in her golden raiment alone on the wild waves'
edge
Surely by no shore else, but here on the bank storm-
shaken
Perdita, bright as a dew-drop engilt of the sun on
the sedge.
Here on a shore unbeheld of his eyes in a dream he
beheld her,
Outcast, fair as a fairy, the child of a far-off king:
And over the babe flower gently the head of a
pastoral elder
Bowed, compassionate, hoar as the hawthorn-
blossom in Spring."*

SWINBURNE

*"'Exactly,' said Puck. 'Can you wonder that the
People of the Hills don't care to be confused with that
painty-winged, wand-waving, sugar-and-shake-your-
head set of impostors? Butterfly wings, indeed!
I've seen Sir Huon and a troop of his people setting
off from Tintagel Castle for Hy Brasil in the teeth of
a soul-westerly gale, with the spray flying all over
the Castle, and the Horses of the Hill wild with
fright. Out they'd go in a lull, screaming like gulls,
and back they'd be driven five good miles inland
before they could come head to wind again.
Butterfly wings! It was Magic—Magic as black
as Merlin could make it, and the whole sea was green
fire and white foam with singing mermaids in it.
And the Horses of the Hill picked their way from one
wave to another by the lightning flashes! That was
how it was in the old days!'*

"'Splendid,' said Dan, but Una shuddered."

RUDYARD KIPLING

UNDER THE EVENING STAR

WE that are of purer fire
Imitate the starry quire
Who in their nightly watchful spheres
Lead in swift round the months and years.
The sounds and seas, with all their finny drove
Now to the moon in wavering morrice move ;
And on the tawny sands and shelves
Trip the pert fairies and the dapper elves.

MILTON

CORALS

BE sure if corals, branching 'neath the ripple
Of ocean, bred there,—fairies watch unroll
Such turban flowers ; I say, such lamps disperse
Thick red flame through that dusk green universe.

BROWNING

A FAIRY REVEL

HE said
That as he rode, an hour or maybe twain
After the sunset, down the coast, he heard
Strange music, and he paused, and turning—there
All down the lonely coast of Lyonesse,
Each with a beacon-star upon his head,
And with a wild sea-light about his feet,
We saw them—headland after headland flame
Far on into the rich heart of the west :
And in the light the white mermaiden swam
And strong man-breasted things stood from the
sea

And sent a deep sea-voice thro' all the land
To which the little elves of chasm and cleft
Made answer, sounding like a distant horn.
So said my father—yea, and furthermore,
Next morning, while he past the dim-lit woods
Himself beheld three spirits mad with joy
Come dashing down on a tall wayside flower
That shook beneath them, as the thistle shakes
When three gray linnets wrangle for the seed :
And still at evenings on before his horse
The flickering fairy-circle wheel'd and broke
Flying, for all the land was full of life.
And when at last he came to Camelot,
A wreath of airy dancers hand-in-hand
Swung round the lighted lantern of the hall ;
And in the hall itself was such a feast
As never man had dreamed ; for every knight
Had whatsoever meat he long'd for served
By hands unseen : and even as he said

Down in the cellars merry bloated things
Shoulder'd the spigot, straddling on the butts
While the wine ran ; so glad were spirits and men
Before the coming of the sinful Queen.

TENNYSON



ARIEL'S SONG

COME unto these yellow sands,
And then take hands ;
Courtsied when you have, and kiss'd
(The wild waves whist),
Foot it featly here and there ;
And, sweet sprites, the burthen bear.
Burthen [dispersedly]. Hark, hark !
Bow wow.

The watch-dogs bark :

Bow wow.

Ariel. Hark, hark ! I hear
The strain of strutting chanticleer
Cry, Cock-a-diddle-dow.

Ferdinand. Where should this music be ? i' the air or
the earth ?

It sounds no more : and, sure, it waits upon
Some god o' the island. Sitting on a bank,
Weeping again the king my father's wreck,
This music crept by me upon the waters
Allaying both their fury and my passion
With its sweet air : thence I have followed it,
Or it hath drawn me rather. But 'tis gone.
No, it begins again.

ARIEL *Sings*

Fall fathom five thy father lies ;
Of his bones are coral made ;
Those are pearls that were his eyes :
Nothing of him that doth fade,
But doth suffer a sea change
Into something rich and strange.

Sea-nymphs hourly ring his knell ;
 Burthen. Ding-dong.
Ariel. Hark ! now I hear them,—
 Ding-dong, bell.

SHAKESPEARE

A FAIRY DIRGE

PRAYER unsaid and mass unsung,
Deadman's dirge must still be rung :
Dingle-dong, the dead-bells sound !
Mermen chant his dirge around !

Wash him bloodless, smooth him fair,
Stretch his limbs and sleek his hair :
Dingle-dong, the death-bells go !
Mermen swing them to and fro !

In the wormless sands shall he
Feast for no foul gluttons be :
Dingle-dong, the dead-bells chime !
Mermen keep the tone and time !

We must with a tomb-stone brave
Shut the shark out from his grave :
Dingle-dong, the dead-bells toll !
Mermen dirgers ring his knoll !

Such a slab will we lay o'er him
All the dead shall rise before him !
Dingle-dong, the dead-bells boom !
Mermen lay him in his tomb !

GEORGE DARLEY

THE MOON-CHILD

A LITTLE lonely child am I
That have not any soul :
God made me but a homeless wave,
Without a goal.

A seal my father was, a seal
That once was man :
My mother loved him tho' he was
'Neath mortal ban.

He took a wave and drown'd her,
She took a wave and lifted him :
And I was born where shadows are
I' the sea-depths dim.

All through the sunny blue-sweet hours
I swim and glide in waters green :
Never by day the mournful shores
By me are seen.

But when the gloom is on the wave
A shell unto the shore I bring :
And then upon the rocks I sit
And plaintive sing.

O what is this wild song I sing,
With meanings strange and dim ?
No soul am I, a wave am I,
And sing the Moon-Child's hymn.

FIONA MACLEOD

THE SEA-FAIRIES

SLOW sail'd the weary mariners and saw,
Betwixt the green brink and the running foam
Sweet faces, rounded arms and bosoms prest
To little harps of gold ; and while they mused,
Whispering to each other half in fear,
Shrill music reach'd them on the middle sea.

Whither away, whither away, whither away ? fly no more.
Whither away from the high green field, and the happy
blossoming shore ?

Day and night to the billow the fountain calls :
Down shower the gambolling water-falls
From wandering over the lea ;
Out of the live-green heart of the dells
They freshen the silvery-crimson shells,
And thick with white bells the clover-hill swells
High over the full-toned sea :
O, hither, come hither and furl your sails,
Come hither to me and to me :
Hither, come hither and frolic and play ;
Here it is only the mew that wails ;
We will sing to you all the day :
Mariner, mariner, furl your sails,
For here are the blissful downs and dales,
And merrily, merrily carol the gales,
And the spangle dances in bight and bay,
And the rainbow forms and flies on the land
Over the islands free ;
And the rainbow lives in the curve of the sand
Hither, come hither and see ;
And the rainbow hangs on the poisoning wave,
And sweet is the colour of cove and cave,

And sweet shall your welcome be :
O hither, come hither and be our lords,
For merry brides are we :
We will kiss sweet kisses, and speak sweet words :
O listen, listen, your eyes shall glisten
With pleasure and love and jubilee :
O listen, listen, your eyes shall glisten
When the sharp clear twang of the golden chords
Runs up the ridgéd sea.
Who can light on as happy a shore
All the world o'er, all the world o'er ?
Whither away ? listen and stay : mariner, mariner, fly
no more.

TENNYSON



THE FORSAKEN MERMAN

COME, dear children, let us away ;
Down and away below !
Now my brothers call from the bay,
Now the great winds shoreward blow,
Now the salt tides seaward flow ;
Now the wild white horses play,
Champ and chafe and toss in the spray
Children dear, let us away !
This way, this way !

Call her once before you go
Call once yet !
In a voice that she will know :
“Margaret ! Margaret !”
Children’s voices should be dear
(Call once more) to a mother’s ear ;
Children’s voices, wild with pain—
Surely she will come again !
Call her once and come away ;
This way, this way !
“Mother dear, we cannot stay !
The wild white horses foam and fret.”
Margaret ! Margaret !

Come, dear children, come away down
Call no more !
One last look at the white wall’d town.
And the little grey church on the windy shore ;
Then come down !
She will not come though you call all day ;
Come away, come away !

Children dear, was it yesterday
We heard the sweet bells over the bay ?
In the caverns where we lay,
Through the surf and through the swell,
The far-off sound of a silver bell ?
Sand-strewn caverns, cool and deep,
Where the winds are all asleep ;
Where the spent lights quiver and gleam,
Where the salt weed sways in the stream,
Where the sea-beasts, ranged all round,
Feed in the ooze of their pasture-ground ;
Where the sea-snakes coil and twine,
Dry their mail and bask in the brine ;
Where great whales come sailing by.
Sail and sail, with unshut eye,
Round the world for ever and aye ?
When did music come this way ?
Children dear, was it yesterday ?

Children dear, was it yesterday
(Call yet once) that she went away ?
Once she sate with you and me,
On a red gold throne in the heart of the sea,
And the youngest sat on her knee.
She comb'd its bright hair, and she tended it well,
When down swung the sound of a far-off bell.
She sigh'd, she look'd up through the clear-green sea ;
She said : " I must go, for my kinsfolk pray
In the little grey church on the shore to-day.
"Twill be Easter-time in the world—ah me !
And I lose my poor soul, Merman ! here with thee."
I said : " Go up, dear heart, through the waves ;
Say thy prayer, and come back to the kind sea caves ! "
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She smiled, she went up through the surf in the bay.
Children dear, was it yesterday ?

Children dear, were we long alone ?
"The sea grows stormy, the little ones moan ;
Long prayers," I said, "in the world they say ;
Come !" I said ; and we rose through the surf in the
bay.

We went up the beach, by the sandy down
Where the sea-stocks bloom, to the white-wall'd town ;
Through the narrow-paved streets, where all was still,
To the little grey church on the windy hill.

From the church came a murmur of folk at their
prayers,

But we stood without in the cold blowing airs.

We climbed on the graves, on the steps worn with
rains,

And we gazed up the aisle through the small leaded
panes.

She sate by the pillar ; we saw her clear :

"Margaret, hist ! come quick, we are here !

Dear heart," I said, "we are long alone ;

The sea grows stormy, the little ones moan."

But, ah, she gave me never a look,

For her eyes were seal'd to the holy book !

Loud prays the priest ; shut stands the door

Come away, children, call no more !

Come away, come down, call no more !

Down, down, down,

Down to the depths of the sea !

She sits at her wheel in the humming town,

Singing most joyfully.

Hark what she sings : " O joy, O joy,
For the humming street, and the child with its toy :
For the priest, and the bell, and the holy well ;
For the wheel where I spun,
And the blessed light of the sun ! "
And so she sings her fill,
Singing most joyfully,
Till the spindle drops from her hand,
And the whizzing wheel stands still.
She steals to the window, and looks at the sand
And over the sand at the sea ;
And her eyes are set in a stare ;
And anon there breaks a sigh,
And anon there drops a tear,
From a sorrow-clouded eye,
And a heart sorrow-laden,
A long, long sigh ;
For the cold strange eyes of a little mermaiden,
And the gleam of her golden hair.

Come away, away children ;
Come children, come down !
The hoarse wind blows colder ;
Lights shine in the town.
She will start from her slumber
When guests shake the door ;
She will hear the winds howling,
Will hear the waves roar.
We shall see, while above us
The waves roar and whirl,
A ceiling of amber,
A pavement of pearl.
Singing : " Here came a mortal,
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But faithless was she !
And alone dwell for ever
The kings of the sea."

But, children, at midnight,
When soft the winds blow,
When clear falls the moonlight,
When spring-tides are low ;
When sweet airs come seaward
From heaths starr'd with broom,
And high rocks throw mildly
On the blanch'd sands a gloom ;
Up the still, glistening beaches,
Up the creeks we will hie,
Over banks of bright seaweed
The ebb-tide leaves dry.
We will gaze, from the sand-hills.
At the white, sleeping town :
At the church on the hill-side—
And then come back down.
Singing : " There dwells a loved one,
But cruel is she !
She left lonely for ever
The kings of the sea."

MATTHEW ARNOLD

SONG OF THE SIRENS

STEER hither, steer your wingéd pines,
All-beaten mariners !
Here lies Love's undiscovered mines,
A prey to passengers ;
Perfumes far sweeter than the best
Which make the Phœnix' urn and nest.
Fear not your ships,
Nor any to oppose you save our lips ;
But come on shore
Where no joy dies till love hath gotten more.

For swelling waves our panting breasts,
Where never storms arise,
Exchange, and be awhile our guests ;
For stars gaze on our eyes.
The compass love shall hourly sing,
And as he goes about the ring,
We will not miss
To tell each point he nameth with a kiss.
Chorus.

Then come on shore,
Where no joy dies till love hath gotten more.

WILLIAM BROWNE

FLOWER-FAIRIES



THE WALL-FLOWERS

LUIGI. *What are those ?
Mere withered wallflowers waving overhead ?
They seem an elvish group with their bleached hair
That lean out of their topmost fortress—look
And listen, mountain men, to what we say,
Hand under chin of each grave earthy face.
Up and show faces all of you !*

ECHO. *" All of you."*

LUIGI. *That's the king dwarf with the scarlet comb ; old Franz
Come down and meet your fate ? Hark—*

ECHO *" Meet your fate !"*

BROWNING

THE THISTLE

*With trees and fields full of fairy elves
And little devils who fight for themselves,
With angels planted in hawthorn bowers
And God himself in the passing hours,
What to others a trifle appears
Fills me full of smiles and tears.
With my inward eye 'tis an old man grey ;
With my outward, a thistle across my way.*

BLAKE

THE GRASS

*This green turf, nicely fine,
A fairy host marshals its serried spears
Imnumerable, and of all not one
Hath turned an edge ; a human conflict here
Had trodden it as o'er our helmèd heads
The wrestling gods contending trample down
A field of legions.*

SYDNEY DOBELL

THE DAISY

*A little Cyclops, with one eye
Staring to threaten and defy,
That thought comes next and instantly
The freak is over,
The shape will vanish and behold !
A silver shield with boss of gold
That spreads itself, some fairy bold
In fight to cover.*

WORDSWORTH

THE WAVING FERNS

IT was about the dawn of day
I heard Etain and Anwyl say
The waving ferns are a fairy forest
It is time, it is time to wander away ;

For the dew is bright on the heather bells,
And the breeze in the clover sways and swells
As the waves on the blue sea wake and wander,
Over and under the braes and dells.

And over the heather-drowsy hill
Where the burdened bees were buzzing still,
The two little sun-bright barefoot children
Wandered down at the flowers' own will ;

For still as the bell in the sunset tolled,
The meadow-sweet and the mary-gold
And the purple orchis kissed their ankles
And lured them over the listening wold.

And the feathery billows of blue-gold grass
Bowed and murmured and bade them pass,
Where a sigh of the sea-wind softly told them
There is no Time, Time never was.

And what if a sorrow were tolled to rest
Where the rich light mellowed away in the West,
As a glory of fruit in an autumn orchard
Heaped and asleep o'er the sea's ripe breast ?

Why should they heed it, what should they know
Of the years that come or the years that go,
With the warm blue sky around and above them
And the wild thyme whispering to and fro ?

For they heard in the dreamy dawn of day
A fairy harper faintly play,
*Follow me, follow me, little children,
Over the hills and far away ;*

*Where the dew is bright on the heather-bells,
And the breeze in the clover sways and swells
As the waves on the blue sea wake and wander,
Over and under the braes and dells.*

And the hare-bells tinkled and rang Ding dong
Bell in the dell as they danced along,
And their feet were stained on the hills with honey,
And crushing the clover till evensong.

And, O the ripples that rolled in rhyme
Under the wild blue banks of thyme,
To the answering rhyme of the rolling ocean's
Golden glory of change and chime !

For they came to a stream and her fairy lover
Caught at her hand and swung her over,
And the broad wet buttercups laughed and gilded
Their golden knees in the deep sweet clover.

There was never a lavrock up in the skies
Blithe as the laugh of their lips and eyes,
As they glanced and glittered across the meadows
To waken the sleepy butterflies.

There was never a wave on the sea so gay
As the light that danced on their homeward way
Where the waving ferns were a fairy forest
And a thousand years as yesterday.

ALFRED NOYES.



AN ELFIN LEGEND

FLORIBEL. And here's a treasure that I found by
chance,

A lily of the valley ; low it lay
Over a mossy mound, withered and weeping
As on a fairy's grave.

Hesperus.

Of all the posy
Give me the rose, though there's a tale of blood
Soiling its name. In elfin annals old
'Tis writ, how Zephyr, envious of his love,
(The love he bare to Summer, who since then
Has weeping visited the world ;) once found
The baby Perfume cradled in a violet ;
('Twas said the beauteous bantling was the child
Of a gay bee, that in his wantonness
Toyed with a pea-bud in a lady's garland ;)
The felon winds confederate with him
Bound the sweet slumberer with golden chains,
Pulled from the wreathed laburnum, and together
Deep cast him in the bosom of a rose,
And fed the fettered wretch with dew and air.
At length his soul, that was a lover's sigh,
Waned from his body, and the guilty blossom
His heart's blood stained. The twilight-haunting gnats
His requiem whined, and harebells tolled his knell ;
And still the bee in that pied velvet dight,
With melancholy song, from flower to flower,
Goes seeking his lost offspring.

T. L. BEDDOES

FLOWER-FAIRIES

FLOWER-FAIRIES—have you found them,
When the summer's dusk is falling,
With the glow-worms watching round them ;
Have you heard them softly calling ?

Silent stand they through the noonlight,
In their flower shapes, fair and quiet ;
But they hie them forth by moonlight
Ready then to sing and riot.

I have heard them ; I have seen them,—
Light from their bright petals raying ;
And the trees bent down to screen them,
Great, wise trees, too old for playing.

Hundreds of them, all together,—
Flashing flocks of flying fairies,—
Crowding through the summer weather,
Seeking where the coolest air is.

And they tell the trees that know them,
As upon their boughs they hover,
Of the things that chance below them,—
How the rose has a new lover.

And the gay Rose laughs, protesting,
“Neighbour Lily is as fickle.”
Then they search where birds are nesting,
And their feathers softly tickle.

Then away they all dance, sweeping,
Having drunk their fill of gladness.
But the trees, their night-watch keeping,
Thrill with tender, pitying sadness ;

For they know of bleak December,
When each bough left cold and bare is,—
When they only shall remember
The bright visits of the fairies,—

When the roses and the lilies
Shall be gone, to come back never
From the land where all so still is
That they sleep and sleep for ever.

PHILIP BOURKE MARSTON

BEFORE AND AFTER FLOWERING

BEFORE.

First Violet.

LO here ! how warm and dark and still it is ;
Sister, lean close to me, that we may kiss.
Here we go rising, rising—know'st thou where ?

Second Violet.

Indeed I cannot tell, nor do I care,
It is so warm and pleasant here. But hark !
What strangest sound was that above the dark ?

First Violet.

As if our sisters all together sang,—
Seemed it not so ?

Second Violet.

More loud than that it rang ;
And louder still it rings, and seems more near.
Oh, I am shaken through and through with fear—
Now in some deadly grip I seem confined !
Farewell, my sister ! Rise, and follow, and find !

First Violet.

From how far off those last words seemed to fall !
Gone where she will not answer when I call !
How lost ? how gone ? Alas ! this sound above me,—
“ Poor little Violet, left with none to love thee ! ”
And now, it seems, I break against that sound !
What bitter pain is this that binds me round,
This pain I press into ! Where have I come ?

AFTER.

A Crocus.

Welcome, dear sisters, to our fairy home !
They call this Garden ; and the time is Spring.
Like you I have felt the pain of flowering ;
But, oh, the wonder and the deep delight
It was to stand here, in the broad sunlight,
And feel the Wind flow round me cool and kind ;
To hear the singing of the leaves the Wind
Goes hurrying through ; to see the mighty Trees,
Where every day the blossoming buds increase.
At evening, when the shining Sun goes in,
The gentler lights look down, and dews begin,
And all is still, beneath the quiet sky,
Save sometimes for the Wind's low lullaby.

First Tree.

Poor little flowers !

Second Tree.

What would you prate of, now ?

First Tree.

They have not heard ; I will keep still. Speak low.

First Violet.

The Trees bend to each other lovingly.

Crocus.

Daily they whisper of fair things to be.
Great talk they make about the coming Rose,
The very fairest flower, they say, that blows !
Such scent she hath ; her leaves are red, they say,
And fold her round in some divine, sweet way.

First Violet.

Would she were come, that for ourselves we might
Have pleasure in this wonder of delight !

Crocus.

Here comes the laughing, dancing, hurrying rain ;
How all the Trees laugh at the Wind's light strain !

First Violet.

We are so near the earth, the Wind goes by
And hurts us not ; but if we stood up high,
Like Trees, then should we soon be blown away.

Second Violet.

Nay ; were it so, we should be strong as they.

Crocus.

I often think how nice to be a Tree ;
Why, sometimes in their boughs the Stars I see.

First Violet.

Have you seen that ?

Crocus.

I have, and so shall you
But hush ! I feel the coming of the dew.

NIGHT.

Second Violet.

How bright it is ! the Trees, how still they are !

Crocus.

I never saw before so bright a Star
As that which stands and shines just over us.

First Violet (after a pause).

My leaves feel strange and very tremulous.

Crocus and Second Violet together.

And mine, and mine !

First Violet.

O warm, kind Sun, appear !

Crocus.

I would the stars were gone, and day were here !

JUST BEFORE DAWN.

First Violet.

Sister ! No answer, sister ? Why so still ?

One Tree to Another.

Poor little Violet, calling through the chill
Of this new frost which did her sister slay,
In which she must herself, too, pass away !
Nay, pretty Violet, be not so dismayed ;
Sleep only, on your sister sweet, is laid.

First Violet.

No pleasant Wind about the garden goes,
Perchance the Wind has gone to bring the Rose.
O sister ! surely now your sleep is done.
I would we had not looked upon the Sun.
My leaves are stiff with pain. O cruel night !
And through my root some sharp thing seems to bite.
Ah me ! what pain, what coming change is this ?

First Tree.

(She dies.)

So endeth many a Violet's dream of bliss.

PHILIP BOURKE MARSTON

THE ROSE AND THE WIND
(GARDEN SECRETS)

DAWN.

The Rose.

WHEN think you comes the Wind,
The Wind that kisses me and is so kind ?
Lo, how the Lily sleeps ! her sleep is light ;
Would I were like the Lily, pale and white !
Will the Wind come ?

The Beech.

Perchance for you too soon.

The Rose.

If not, how could I live until the noon ?
What, think you, Beech-tree, makes the Wind delay ?
Why comes he not at breaking of the day ?

The Beech.

Hush, child, and, like the Lily, go to sleep.

The Rose.

You know I cannot.

The Beech.

Nay, then, do not weep.
(*After a pause.*)

Your lover comes, be happy now, O Rose !
He softly through my bending branches goes.
Soon he shall come, and you shall feel his kiss

The Rose.

Already my flushed heart grows faint with bliss ;
Love, I have longed for you through all the night.

The Wind.

And I to kiss your petals warm and bright.

The Rose.

Laugh round me, Love, and kiss me ; it is well.
Nay, have no fear, the Lily will not tell.

MORNING

The Rose.

'Twas dawn when first you came ; and now the sun
Shines brightly and the dews of dawn are done.
'Tis well you take me so in your embrace ;
But lay me back again into my place,
For I am worn, perhaps with bliss extreme.

The Wind.

Nay, you must wake, Love, from this childish dream.

The Rose.

'Tis you, Love, who seem changed ; your laugh is loud,
And 'neath your stormy kiss my head is bowed.
O Love, O Wind, a space will you not spare ?

The Wind.

Not while your petals are so soft and fair.

The Rose.

My buds are blind with leaves, they cannot see,—
O Love, O Wind, will you not pity me ?

EVENING

The Beech.

O Wind, a word with you before you pass ;
What did you to the Rose that on the grass
Broken she lies and pale, who loves you so ?

The Wind.

Roses must live and love, and winds must blow.

PHILIP BOURKE MARSTON



THE BROKEN-HEARTED BEE

VERONICA. A fable and a dream ! Here, in this garden,

It seemed I was a lily :

Torrismond. So you are,
But fitter for Arabian paradise,
Or those arched gardens where pale-petalled stars
With sunlight honeying their dewy cores
Tremble on sinuous Corinthian necks,—
Where Morn her roses feeds, her violets Night.

Veronica. And to my lily-ship a wooer came
Sailing upon the curvous air of morn,
(For 'twas a sunny dream, and a May sky
The lid of it) ; and this imagined suitor,
A glass-winged, tortoise-shell, heart-broken bee
Was—he you know of, heart. How did he bend
His slender knee, doffing his velvet cap,
And swearing by the taste of Venus' lip,
If I did not accept his airy love
The truest heart that ever told the minutes
Within an insect's breast, should shed its life
Around the hilt of his unsheathed sting.
And then this tiny thunderer of flowers,
Quite, quite subdued, let down a string of tears,
(Little they were, but full of beeish truth),
Almost a dew-drop-much, on the fair pages
Of transmigrated me ; whereon, O Love !
Thou tamed'st the straightest prude of Flora's daughters
For I did pity *Torrismond* the bee,
And let him, if his life lived in my love,
Have that for courtesy.

T. L. BEDDOES

THE COWSLIPS

FIRST a golden stranger, meek and lone
Then the vanward of a fairy host
Following the nightingales,
Bashful and bold, in sudden troops and bands,
Takes the willowy depths of all the dales,
And, on unsuspected nights,
Makes vantage-ground of mounts and heights
Till, ere one knew, a south wind blew,
And a fond invasion holds the fields !
Over the shadowy meadowy season, up and down from
coast to coast,
A pigmy folk, a yellow-haired people stands,
Stands and hangs its head and smiles.

SYDNEY DOBELL

THE GREEN LADY (SPRING)

WILD fawn, wild fawn,
Hast seen the Green Lady?
The merles are singing,
The ferns are springing,
The little leaves whisper from dusk to dawn—
Green Lady! Green Lady!
The little leaves whisper from dusk to dawn—
Wild fawn, wild fawn!

Wild fawn, wild fawn,
Hast seen the Green Lady?
The bird in the nest,
And the child at the breast,
They open wide eyes as she comes down the dawn—
The bonnie Green Lady,
Bird and child make a whisper of music at dawn,
Wild fawn, wild fawn!

Wild fawn, wild fawn,
Dost thou flee the Green Lady?
Her wild flowers will race thee,
Her sunbeams will chase thee,
Her laughter is ringing aloud in the dawn—
O the Green Lady
With yellow flowers strewing the ways of the dawn,
Wild fawn, wild fawn!

FIONA MACLEOD

THE TWO SWANS—A FAIRY TALE

IMMORTAL Imogen, crowned queen above
The lilies of thy sex, vouchsafe to hear
A fairy dream in honour of true love—
True above ills, and frailty, and all fear—
Perchance a shadow of his own career
Whose youth was darkly prisoned and long twined
By serpent-sorrow, till white Love drew near,
And sweetly sang him free, and round his mind
A blue horizon threw, wherein no grief may wind.

I saw a tower builded on a lake,
Mocked by its inverse shadow, dark and deep—
That seemed a still intenser night to make,
Wherein the quiet waters sunk to sleep,—
And, whatsoever was prisoned in that keep,
A monstrous Snake was warden :—round and round
In sable ringlets I beheld him creep,
Blackest amid black shadows, to the ground,
Whilst his enormous head the topmost turret crowned :

From whence he shot fierce light against the stars,
Making the pale moon paler with affright ;
And with his ruby eye out-threatened Mars—
That blazed in the mid-heavens, hot and bright—
Nor slept, nor winked, but with a steadfast spite
Watched their wan looks and tremblings in the skies ;
And that he might not slumber in the night,
The curtain-lids were plucked from his large eyes,
So he might never drowse, but watch his secret prize.

Prince or princess in dismal durance pent,
Victims of old Enchantment's love or hate,
Their lives must all in painful sighs be spent,
Watching the lonely waters soon and late,
And clouds that pass and leave them to their fate,
Or company their grief with heavy tears :—
Meanwhile that Hope can spy no golden gate
For sweet escapement, but in darksome fears
They weep and pine away as if immortal years.

No gentle bird with gold upon its wing
Will perch upon the grate—the gentle bird
Is safe in leafy dell, and will not bring
Freedom's sweet keynote and commission-word
Learned of a fairy's lips, for pity stirred—
Lest while he trembling sings, untimely guest !
Watched by that cruel Snake and darkly heard,
He leave a widow on her lonely nest,
To press in silent grief the darlings of her breast.

No gallant knight, adventurous, in his bark,
Will seek the fruitful perils of the place,
To rouse with dipping oar the waters dark
That bear that serpent-image on their face.
And Love, brave Love ! though he attempt the base
Nerved to his loyal death, he may not win
His captive lady from the strict embrace
Of that foul Serpent, clasping her within
His sable folds—like Eve enthralled by the old Sin.

But there is none—no knight in panoply,
Nor Love, entrenched in his strong steely coat :
No little speck—no sail—no helper nigh,
No sign—no whispering—no plash of boat :—
The distant shores show dimly and remote,
Made of a deeper mist,—serene and grey,—
And slow and mute the cloudy shadows float
Over the gloomy wave, and pass away,
Chased by the silver beams that on their marges play.

And bright and silvery the willows sleep
Over the shady verge—no mad winds tease
Their hoary heads ; but quietly they weep
Their sprinkling leaves—half fountains and half trees ;
There lilies be—and fairer than all these,
A solitary Swan her breast of snow
Launches against the wave that seems to freeze
Into a chaste reflection, still below,
Twin-shadow of herself wherever she may go.

And forth she paddles in the very noon
Of solemn midnight, like an elfin thing
Charmed into being by the argent moon—
Whose silver light for love of her fair wing
Goes with her in the shade, still worshipping
Her dainty plumage :—all around her grew
A radiant circlet, like a fairy ring ;
And all behind, a tiny little clue
Of light, to guide her back across the waters blue.

And sure she is no meaner than a fay
Redeemed from sleepy death, for beauty's sake,
By old ordainment :—silent as she lay,
Touched by a moonlight wand I saw her wake,
And cut her leafy slough and so forsake
The verdant prison of her lily peers,
That slept amidst the stars upon the lake—
A breathing shape—restored to human fears,
And new-born love and grief—self-conscious of her tears.

And now she clasps her wings around her heart,
And near that lonely isle begins to glide,
Pale as her fears, and oft-times with a start
Turns her impatient head from side to side
In universal terrors—all too wide
To watch ; and often to that marble keep
Upturns her pearly eyes, as if she spied
Some foe, and crouches in the shadows steep
That in the gloomy wave go diving fathoms deep.

And well she may, to spy that fearful thing
All down the dusky walls in circlets wound
Alas ! for what rare prize, with many a ring
Girding the marble casket round and round ?
His folded tail, lost in the gloom profound,
Terribly darkeneth the rocky base ;
But on the top his monstrous head is crowned
With prickly spears, and on his doubtful face
Gleam his unwearied eyes, red watches of the place.

Alas ! of the hot fires that nightly fall,
No one will scorch him in those orbs of spite,
So he may never see beneath the wall
That timid little creature, all too bright,
That stretches her fair neck, slender and white,
Invoking the pale moon, and vainly tries
Her throbbing throat, as if to charm the night
With song—but, hush—it perishes in sighs,
And there will be no dirge sad-swelling, though she dies !

She droops—she sinks—she leans upon the lake,
Fainting again into a lifeless flower ;
But soon the chilly springs anoint and wake
Her spirit from its death, and with new power
She sheds her stifled sorrows in a shower
Of tender song, timed to her falling tears—
That wins the shady summit of that tower,
And, trembling all the sweeter for its fears,
Fills with imploring moan that cruel monster's ears.

And lo ! the scaly beast is all deprest,
Subdued like Argus by the might of sound—
What time Apollo his sweet lute addrest
To magic converse with the air, and bound
The many monster eyes, all slumber-drowned :—
So on the turret-top that watchful Snake
Pillows his giant head, and lists profound,
As if his wrathful spite would never wake,
Charmed into sudden sleep for Love and Beauty's sake !

His prickly crest lies prone upon his crown,
And thirsty lip from lip parted flies,
To drink that dainty flood of music down—
His scaly throat is big with pent-up sighs—
And whilst his hollow ear entranced lies,
His looks for envy of the charmed sense
Are fain to listen, till his steadfast eyes,
Stung into pain by their own impotence,
Distil enormous tears into the lake immense.

Oh, tuneful Swan ! oh, melancholy bird !
Sweet was that midnight miracle of song,
Rich with ripe sorrow, needful of no word
To tell of pain, and love, and love's deep wrong—
Hinting a piteous tale—perchance how long
Thy unknown tears were mingled with the lake,
What time disguised thy leafy mates among—
And no eye knew what human love and ache
Dwelt in those dewy leaves, and heart so nigh to break.

Therefore no poet will ungently touch
The water-lily, on whose eyelids dew
Trembles like tears ; but ever hold it such
As human pain may wander through and through,
Turning the pale leaf paler in its hue—
Wherein life dwells, transfigured, not entombed
By magic spells. Alas ! who ever knew
Sorrow in all its shapes, leafy and plumed,
Or in gross husks of brutes eternally inhumed ?

And now the winged song has scaled the height
Of that dark dwelling, builded for despair,
And soon a little casement flashing bright
Widens self-opened into the cool air—
That music like a bird may enter there
And soothe the captive in his stony cage ;
For there is nought of grief, or painful care,
But plaintive song may happily engage
From sense of its own ill, and tenderly assuage.

And forth into the light, small and remote,
A creature, like the fair son of a king,
Draws to the lattice in his jewelled coat
Against the silver moonlight glistening,
And leans upon his white hand listening
To that sweet music that with tenderer tone
Salutes him, wondering what kindly thing
Is come to soothe him with so tuneful moan,
Singing beneath the walls as if for him alone !

And while he listens, the mysterious song,
Woven with timid particles of speech,
Twines into passionate words that grieve along
The melancholy notes, and softly teach
The secrets of true love,—that trembling reach
His earnest ear, and through the shadows dun
He missions like replies, and each to each
Their silver voices mingle into one,
Like blended streams that make one music as they run.

"Ah Love ! my hope is swooning in my heart."—
"Ay, sweet ! my cage is strong and hung full high."—
"Alas ! our lips are held so far apart,
Thy words come faint,—they have so far to fly !"—
"If I may only shun that serpent-eye !"
"Ah me ! that serpent-eye doth never sleep."—
"Then nearer thee, Love's martyr, I will lie !"
"Alas, alas ! that word has made me weep !
For pity's sake remain safe in thy marble keep !"

"My marble keep ! it is my marble tomb !"—
"Nay, sweet ! but thou hast there thy living breath."
"Aye to expend in sighs for this hard doom."
"But I will come to thee and sing beneath,
And nightly so beguile this serpent wreath."—
"Nay, I will find a path from these despairs."—
"Ah ! needs then thou must tread the back of death,
Making his stony ribs thy stony stairs ?"—
Behold his ruby eye, how fearfully it glares !

Full sudden at these words, the princely youth
Leaps on the scaly back that slumbers, still
Unconscious of his foot, yet not for ruth,
But numbed to dulness by the fairy skill
Of that sweet music (all more wild and shrill
For intense fear) that charmed him as he lay—
Meanwhile the lover nerves his desperate will,
Held some short throbs by natural dismay,
Then, down the serpent-track begins his darksome way.

Now dimly seen—now toiling out of sight,
Eclipsed and covered by the envious wall ;
Now fair and spangled in the sudden light,
And clinging with wide arms for fear of fall :
Now dark and sheltered by a kindly pall
Of dusky shadow from his wakeful foe ;
Slowly he winds adown—dimly and small.
Watched by the gentle Swan that sings below,
Her hope increasing, still, the larger he doth grow.

But nine times nine the Serpent folds embrace
The marble walls about—which he must tread
Before his anxious foot may touch the base :
Long is the dreary path, and must be sped !
But Love, that holds the mastery of dread,
Braces his spirit, and with constant toil
He wins his way, and now, with arms outspread,
Impatient plunges from the last long coil :
So may all gentle Love ungentle Malice foil !

The song is hushed, the charm is all complete,
And two fair Swans are swimming on the lake :
But scarce their tender bills have time to meet,
When fiercely drops adown that cruel Snake—
His steely scales a fearful rustling make,
Like autumn leaves that tremble and foretell
The sable storm ;—the plummy lovers quake—
And feel the troubled waters pant and swell,
Heaved by the giant bulk of their pursuer fell.

His jaws, wide yawning like the gates of Death,
Hiss horrible pursuit—his red eyes glare
The waters into blood—his eager breath
Grows hot upon their plumes :—now, minstrel fair !
She drops her ring into the waves, and there
It widens all around, a fairy ring
Wrought of the silver light—the fearful pair
Swim in the very midst, and pant and cling
The closer for their fear, and tremble wing to wing.

Bending their course over the pale grey lake,
Against the pallid East, wherein light played
In tender flushes, still the baffled Snake
Circled them round continually, and bayed
Hoarsely and loud, forbidden to invade
The sanctuary ring : his sable mail
Rolled darkly through the flood, and writhed and made
A shining track over the waters pale,
Lashed into boiling foam by his enormous tail.

And so they sailed into the distance dim,
Into the very distance—small and white,
Like snowy blossoms of the spring that swim
Over the brooklets—followed by the spite
Of that huge Serpent, that with wild affright
Worried them on their course, and sore annoy,
Till on the grassy marge I saw them 'light,
And change, anon, a gentle girl and boy,
Locked in embrace of sweet unutterable joy !

Then came the Morn, and with her pearly showers
Wept on them, like a mother, in whose eyes
Tears are no grief ; and from his rosy bowers
The Oriental sun began to rise,
Chasing the darksome shadows from the skies ;
Wherewith that sable Serpent far away
Fled, like a part of night—delicious sighs
From waking blossoms purified the day,
And little birds were singing sweetly from each spray.
TOM HOOD

DAFFADILL

BATTE. *Gorbo*, as thou cam'st this waye
By yonder little hill,
Or as thou through the fields didst straye
Sawst thou my *Daffadill*?

Shee's in a frock of Lincolne greene
The colour maides delight
And neuer hath her beauty seen
But through a vale of white.

Then Roses richer to behold
That trim vp louers bowers,
The Pansy and the Marigould
Tho *Phæbus* Paramours.

Gorbo. Thou well describ'st the *Daffadill*
It is not full an hower
Since by the spring neare yonder hill
I saw that louely flower.

Batte. Yet my faire flower thou didst not meet,
Nor news of her didst bring,
And yet my *Daffadill* more sweete,
Then that by yonder spring.

Gorbo. I saw a shepheard that doth keepe
In yonder field of Lillies,
Was making (as he fed his sheepe)
A wreathe of *Daffadillies*.

Batte. Yet *Gorbo* thou delud'st me still,
My flower thou didst not see,
You know my pretie *Daffadill*
Is worne of none but me.

To shew it selfe but neare her seate,
No Lilly is so bould,
Except to shade her from the heate,
Or keepe her from the colde :

Gorbo. Through yonder vale as I did passe,
Descending from the hill,
I met a smerking bony lasse,
They call her *Daffadill* :

Whose presence as along she went,
The pretty flowers did greet,
As though their heads they downward bent,
With homage to her feete.

And all the shepherds that were nie,
From toppe of euery hill,
Vnto the vallies low did crie,
There goes sweet *Daffadill*.

Gorbo. I gentle shepheard, now with joy
Thou all my flockes dost fill,
That's she alone kind shepheards boy,
Let us to *Daffadill*.

MICHAEL DRAYTON

WINTER IN NORTHUMBERLAND

I

OUTSIDE the garden
The wet skies harden ;
The gates are barred on
The summer side :
"Shut out the flower-time,
Sunbeam and shower-time ;
Make way for our time,"
Wild winds have cried.
Green once and cheery,
The woods, worn weary,
Sigh as the dreary
Weak sun goes home :
A great wind grapples
The wave, and dapples
The dead green floor of the sea with foam.

II

Through fell and moorland,
And salt-sea foreland,
Our noisy norland
Resounds and rings ;
Waste waves thereunder
Are blown in sunder,
And winds make thunder
With cloudwide wings ;
Sea-drift makes dimmer
The beacon's glimmer ;
Nor sail nor swimmer
Can try the tides ;

And snowdrifts thicken
Where, when leaves quicken,
Under the heather the sundew hides.

III

Green land and red land
Moorside and headland,
Are white as dead land,
Are all as one ;
Nor honied heather
Nor bells to gather,
Fair with fair weather
And faithful sun :
Fierce frost has eaten
All flowers that sweeten
The fells rain-beaten ;
And winds their foes
Have made the snow's bed
Down in the rose-bed ;
Deep in the snow's bed bury the rose.

IV

Bury her deeper
Than any sleeper ;
Sweet dreams will keep her
All day, all night ;
Though sleep benumb her
And time o'ercome her,
She dreams of summer,
And takes delight,
Dreaming and sleeping
In love's good keeping,

While rain is weeping
And no leaves cling ;
Winds will come bringing her
Comfort, and singing her
Stories and songs and good news of the spring.

v

Draw the white curtain
Close, and be certain
She takes no hurt in
Her soft low bed ;
She feels no colder
And grows not older
Though snows enfold her
From foot to head ;
She turns not chilly
Like weed and lily
In marsh or hilly
High watershed,
Or green soft island
In lakes of highland ;
She sleeps awhile, and she is not dead.

vi

For all the hours,
Come sun, come showers,
Are friends of flowers,
And fairies all ;
When frost entrapped her,
They came and lapped her
In leaves, and wrapped her
With shroud and pall ;

In red leaves wound her,
With dead leaves bound her
Dead brows, and round her
 A death-knell rang;
Rang the death-bell for her,
Sang, "Is it well for her,
Well, is it well with you, rose?" they sang.

VII

O what and where is
The rose now, fairies,
So shrill the air is,
 So wild the sky?
Poor last of roses,
Her worst of woes is
The noise she knows is
 The winter's cry;
His hunting hollo
Has scared the swallow;
Fain would she follow
 And fain would fly:
But wind unsettles
Her poor last petals;
Had she but wings, and she would not die.

VIII

Come, as you love her,
Come close and cover
Her white face over,
 And forth again
Ere sunset glances
On foam that dances,

Through lowering lances
Of bright white rain ;
And make your playtime
Of winter's daytime.
As if the Maytime.
Were here to sing ;
As if the snowballs
Were soft like blowballs,
Blown in a mist from the stalk in the spring.

IX

Each reed that grows in
Our stream is frozen,
The fields it flows in
Are hard and black ;
The water-fairy
Waits wise and wary
Till time shall vary
And thaws come back.
"O sister, water,"
The wind besought her,
"O twin-born daughter
Of spring with me,
Stay with me, play with me,
Take the warm way with me,
Straight for the summer and oversea."

X

But winds will vary,
And wise and wary
The patient fairy
Of water waits ;

All shrunk and wizen,
In iron prison,
Till spring re-risen
 Unbar the gates ;
Till, as with clamour
Of axe and hammer,
Chained streams that stammer
 And struggle in straits
Burst bonds that shiver,
 And thaws deliver
The roaring river in stormy spates.

XI

In fierce March weather
White waves break tether,
And whirled together
 At either hand,
Like weeds uplifted,
The tree-trunks rifted
In spars are drifted,
 Like foam or sand,
Past swamp and shallow
And reed-beds callow,
Through pool and shallow,
 To wind and lee,
Till, no more tongue-tied,
Full flood and young tide
Roar down the rapids and storm the sea.

XII

As men's cheeks faded
On shores invaded,

When shorewards waded
The lords of fight ;
When churl and craven
Saw hard on haven
The wide-winged raven
At mainmast height ;
When monks affrighted
To windward sighted
The birds full-flighted
Of swift sea-kings ;
So earth turns paler
When Storm the sailor
Steers in with a roar in the race of his wings.

XIII

O strong sea-sailor,
Whose cheek turns paler
For wind or hail or
For fear of thee ?
O far sea-farer,
O thunder-bearer,
Thy songs are rarer
Than soft songs be.
O fleet-foot stranger,
O north-sea ranger
Through days of danger
And ways of fear,
Blow thy horn here for us,
Blow the sky clear for us,
Send us the song of the sea to hear.

XIV

Roll the strong stream of it
 Up, till the scream of it
 Wake from a dream of it
 Children that sleep,
 Seaman that fare for them
 Forth, with a prayer for them ;
 Shall not God care for them,
 Angels not keep ?
 Spare not the surges
 Thy stormy scourges ;
 Spare us the dirges
 Of wives that weep.
 Turn back the waves for us :
 Dig no fresh graves for us,
 Wind, in the manifold gulfs of the deep.

XV

O stout north-easter
 Sea-king, land-waster,
 For all thine haste, or
 Thy stormy skill,
 Yet hadst thou never,
 For all endeavour
 Strength to dissever
 Or strength to spill,
 Save of his giving
 Who gave our living,
 Whose hands are weaving
 What ours fulfil ;
 Whose feet tread under

The storms and thunder ;
Who made our wonder to work his will.

XVI

His years and hours,
His world's blind powers,
His stars and flowers,
His nights and days,
Sea-tide and river,
And waves that shiver,
Praise God, the giver
Of tongues to praise.
Winds in their blowing,
And fruits in growing ;
Time in its going,
While time shall be ;
In death and living,
With one thanksgiving
Praise him whose hand is the strength of the sea.

ALGERNON CHARLES SWINBURNE

ENCHANTED WOODS

*Enter these enchanted woods
You who dare.*

GEORGE MEREDITH

THE FAIRY PRINCE

O, beware
This child scarce yet awake upon the world !
Dread her first ecstasy, if one should come
That should appear to her half-opened eyes
Wonderful as a prince from fairyland
Or venturing through forests toward her face.

STEPHEN PHILLIPS

THE NIGHTINGALE IN FAIRYLAND

The same that oft-times hath
Charmed magic casements opening on the foam
Of perilous seas in fairy lands forlorn.

KEATS

THE FAIRY PRINCESS

O face immured beside a fairy sea
That leaned down at dead midnight to be kissed !
O beauty folded up in forests old !

STEPHEN PHILLIPS

THE QUEEN AWAITS HER PRINCE

Oft when evening sobered all the air,
No doubt but she would sit and marvel where
He tarried, by the bounds of what strange sea ;
And peradventure look at intervals
Forth of the windows of her palace walls
And watch the gloaming darken fount and tree ;
And think on twilight shores.

WILLIAM WATSON

A MAGIC CASEMENT

YE floors, in whose black oak
The straitened hamadryad lives and groans,
Ye creaking dark and antiquated floors,
Who know so well in what sad note to join
The weary lullaby what time she rocks
Her babe, and murmurs music sad and low,
So sad and low as if this tower did keep
The murmur of the years as a sea-shell
The sea, or in these legendary halls
The mere air stirred, and with some old unknown
Sufficient conscience move upon itself,
Whispering and sighing ; ruined castle-wall
Whereby she groweth like some delicate flower
In a deserted garden, thou grim wall
Hemming her in with thine unmannered rock
Wherein I set her as a wandering clown
Who, in a fairy-ring, by night doth seize
Some elfin taper, and would have it burn
In his gaunt lanthorn wrought by human hands
Uncouth, yet art so passing bright with her—
So fragrant ! little window in the wall,
Eye-lashed with balmy sprays of honeysuckle,
Sweet jessamine, and ivy ever sad,
Wherein like a most melancholy eye,
All day she sits and looks forth on a world
Less fair than she, and as a living soul
Informs the rugged face of the old tower
With beauty ; when the soul hath left the face
The sad eye looks no longer from the lid,
The sweet light is put out in the long rain,

The flower is withered on the wall, the voice
Will never murmur any more, and ye,
Ye, that both spake and saw, are dumb and blind.
SYDNEY DOBELL.

TO PIERROT IN LOVE

*The clown whose kisses turned a crone to a Fairy-Queen **

WHAT dost thou here, in Love's enchanted wood,
Pierrot, who once wert safe as clown and thief—
Held safe by love of fun and wine and food—
From her who follows love of Woman, Grief—
Her who, of old, stalked over Eden-grass
Behind Love's baby-feet whose shadow threw
On every brook, as on a magic glass,
Prophetic shapes of what should come to pass
When tears got mixt with Paradisal dew ?

Kisses are loved but for the lips that kiss :
Thine have restored a princess to her throne,
Breaking the spell which barred from fairy bliss
A fay and shrank her to a wrinkled crone ;
But, if thou dream'st that thou from Pantomime
Shalt clasp an angel of the mystic moon—
Clasp her on banks of Love's own rose and thyme,
While woodland warblers ring the nuptial chime—
Bottom to thee were but a meek buffoon.

When yonder fairy, long ago, was told
The spell which caught her in malign eclipse,
Turning her radiant body foul and old,
Would yield to some knight-errant's virgin lips,
And when, through many a weary day and night,
She, wondering who the paladin would be
Whose kiss should charm her from her grievous plight,
Pictured a-many princely heroes bright,
Dost thou suppose she ever pictured thee ?

* A reminiscence of the open-air performance of Banville's "Le Baiser."

'Tis true the mischief of the foeman's charm
Yielded to thee—to that first kiss of thine.
We saw her tremble—lift a rose-wreath arm,
Which late, all veined and shrivelled, made her pine ;
We saw her fingers rise and touch her cheek,
As if the morning breeze across the wood,
Which lately seemed to strike so chill and bleak
Through all the wasted body, bent and weak,
Were light and music now within her blood.

'Tis true thy kiss made all her form expand—
Made all the skin grow smooth and pure as pearl,
Till there she stood, tender, yet tall and grand,
A queen of Færy yet a lovesome girl,
Within whose eyes—whose wide, new-litten eyes—
New litten by thy kiss's re-creation—
Expectant joy that yet was wild surprise
Made all her flesh like light of summer skies
When dawn lies dreaming of the morn's carnation.

But when thou saw'st the breaking of the spell
Within whose grip of might her soul had pined,
Like some sweet butterfly that breaks the cell
In which its purple pinions slept confined,
And when thou heard'st the strains of elfin song
Her sisters sang from rainbow cars above her—
Did'st thou suppose that she, though prisoned long,
And freed at last by thee from all the wrong,
Must for that kiss take Harlequin for lover ?

Hearken, sweet fool ! Though Banville carried thee
To lawns where love and song still share the sward
Beyond the golden river few can see
And fewer still, in these grey days, can ford ;

And though he bade the wings of Passion fan
Thy face, till every line grows bright and human,
Feathered thy spirit's wing for wider span,
And fired thee with the fire that comes to man
When first he plucks the rose of Nature, Woman ;

And though our actress gives thee that sweet gaze
Where spirit and matter mingle in liquid blue—
That face, where pity through the frolic plays—
That form, whose lines of light Love's pencil drew—
That voice, whose music seems a new caress
Whenever passion makes a new transition
From key to key of joy or quaint distress—
That sigh, when, now, thy fairy's loveliness
Leaves thee alone to mourn Love's vanished vision :

Still art thou Pierrot—naught but Pierrot ever ;
For is not this the very word of Fate :
“No mortal, clown or king, shall e'er dis sever
His present glory from the past estate” ?
Yet be thou wise and dry those foolish tears ;
The clown's first kiss was needed, not the clown,
By her who, fired by hopes and chilled by fears,
Sought but a kiss like thine for years on years :
Be wise, I say, and wander back to town.

THEODORE WATTS-DUNTON.

A TREE SONG

O F all the trees that grow so fair,
Old England to adorn,
Greater are none beneath the Sun
Than Oak, and Ash, and Thorn,
Sing Oak, and Ash, and Thorn, good Sirs,
(All of a Midsummer morn) !
Surely we sing no little thing,
In Oak, and Ash, and Thorn !

Oak of the Clay lived many a day,
Or ever Æneas began ;
Ash of the Loam was a lady at home,
When Brut was an outlaw man ;
Thorn of the Down saw New Troy Town
(From which was London born) ;
Witness hereby the ancientry
Of Oak, and Ash, and Thorn !

Yew that is old in churchyard mould,
He breedeth a mighty bow ;
Alder for shoes do wise men choose,
And beech for cups also.
But when ye have killed, and your bowl is spilled,
And your shoes are clean outworn,
Back ye must speed for all that ye need,
To Oak, and Ash, and Thorn !

Ellum she hateth mankind, and waiteth
Till every gust be laid,
To drop a limb on the head of him,
That anyway trusts her shade :

But whether a lad be sober or sad,
Or mellow with ale from the horn,
He will take no wrong when he lieth along
'Neath Oak, and Ash, and Thorn !

Oh, do not tell the Priest our plight,
Or he would call it a sin ;
But—we have been out in the woods all night,
A-conjuring Summer in !
And we bring you news by word of mouth—
Good news for cattle and corn—
Now is the Sun come up from the South,
With Oak, and Ash, and Thorn !

Sing Oak, and Ash, and Thorn, good Sirs
(All of a Midsummer morn) !
England shall bide till Judgment Tide,
By Oak, and Ash, and Thorn !

RUDYARD KIPLING



THOMAS THE RHYMER

PART FIRST (ANCIENT)

THE popular tale bears, that Thomas was carried off, at an early age, to the Fairy Land where he acquired all the knowledge which made him afterwards so famous. After seven years' residence, he was permitted to return to the earth to enlighten and astonish his countrymen by his prophetic powers ; still, however, remaining bound to return to his royal mistress when she should intimate her pleasure. Accordingly, while Thomas was making merry with his friends in the Tower of Ercildoune, a person came running in, and told, with marks of fear and astonishment, that a hart and hind had left the neighbouring forest, and were, composedly and slowly, parading the street of the village. The prophet instantly arose, left his habitation, and followed the wonderful animals to the forest, whence he was never seen to return. According to the popular belief, he still "drees his weird" in Fairy Land, and is one day expected to revisit earth. In the mean while, his memory is held in the most profound respect. The Eildon Tree, from beneath the shade of which he delivered his prophecies, now no longer exists ; but the spot is marked by a large stone, called Eildon Tree Stone. A neighbouring rivulet takes the name of the Bogle Burn (Goblin Brook) from the Rhymer's supernatural visitants.

TRUE THOMAS lay on Huntlie bank ;*
A ferlie † he spied wi' his ee ;
And there he saw a ladye bright,
Come riding down by the Eildon Tree.

Her shirt was o' the grass-green silk,
Her mantle o' the velvet fyne ;

* A spot afterwards included in the domain of Abbotsford. † Wonder.



At ilka * tett of her horse's mane,
Hung fifty siller bells and nine.

True Thomas he pull'd aff his cap,
And louted † low down to his knee,
"All hail, thou mighty Queen of Heaven !
For thy peer on earth I never did see"—

"O no, O no, Thomas," she said,
"That name does not belang to me ;
I am but the Queen of fair Elfland,
That am hither come to visit thee."

"Harp and carp, Thomas," she said ;
"Harp and carp along wi' me ;
And if ye dare to kiss my lips,
Sure of your bodie I will be."—

"Betide me weal, betide me woe,
That weird ‡ shall never daunton me."—
Syne he has kiss'd her rosy lips,
All underneath the Eildon Tree.

"Now, ye maun go wi' me," she said ;
"True Thomas, ye maun go wi' me ;
And ye maun serve me seven years,
Thro' weal or woe as may chance to be."

She mounted on her milk-white steed !
She's ta'en true Thomas up behind :
And aye, whene'er her bridle rung,
The steed flew swifter than the wind.

* Each.

† Bowed.

‡ Destiny shall not alarm me.

O they rade on, and farther on ;
The steed gaed swifter than the wind :
Until they reach'd a desert wide,
And living land was left behind.

“ Light down, light down, now, true Thomas,
And lean your head upon my knee ;
Abide and rest a little space,
And I will shew you ferlies * three.

“ O see ye not yon narrow road,
So thick beset with thorns and briers ?
That is the path of righteousness, ✓
Though after it but a few enquires.

“ And see ye not that braid braid road,
That lies across that lily leven ?
That is the path of wickedness,
Though some call it the road to heaven.

“ And see not ye that bonny road,
That winds about the fernie brae ?
That is the road to fair Elfland,
Where thou and I this night maun gae.

“ But, Thomas, ye maun hold your tongue,
Whatever ye may hear or see ;
For, if ye speak word in Elflyn land,
Ye'll ne'er get back to your ain countrie.”

O they rade on, and farther on,
And they waded through rivers aboon the knee,

* Wonders.

And they saw neither sun nor moon,
But they heard the roaring of the sea.

It was mirk mirk night, and there was nae stern light,
And they waded through red blude to the knee,
For a' the blude that's shed on earth
Rins through the springs o' that countrie.

Syne they came on to a garden green,
And she pu'd an apple frae a tree *—
“Take this for thy wages, true Thomas;
It will give thee the tongue that can never lie.”—

“My tongue is mine ain,” true Thomas said;
“A gudely gift ye wad gie to me!
I neither dought to buy nor sell,
At fair or tryst where I may be.

“I dought neither speak to prince or peer,
Nor ask of grace from fair ladye.”—
“Now hold thy peace!” the lady said,
“For as I say, so must it be.”—

He has gotten a coat of the even cloth,
And a pair of shoes of velvet green;
And till seven years were gane and past,
True Thomas on earth was never seen.

* The traditional commentary upon this ballad informs us, that the apple was the produce of the fatal Tree of Knowledge, and that the garden was the terrestrial paradise. The repugnance of Thomas to be debarred the use of falsehood, when he might find it convenient, has a comic effect.—SCOTT.

PART SECOND (ALTERED FROM ANCIENT PROPHECIES).

When seven years were come and gane,
The sun blink'd fair on pool and stream ;
And Thomas lay on Huntlie Bank,
Like one awaken'd from a dream.

He heard the trampling of a steed,
He saw the flash of armour flee,
And he beheld a gallant knight
Come riding down by the Eildon tree.

He was a stalwart knight, and strong ;
Of giant make he 'pear'd to be :
He stirr'd his horse, as he were wode,
Wi' gilded spurs, of faushion free.

Says—" Well met, well met, true Thomas !
Some uncouth ferlies show to me."—
Says—" Christ thee save, Corspatrick brave !
Thrice welcume, good Dunbar, to me !

" Light down, light down, Corspatrick brave !
And I will show thee curses three,
Shall gar fair Scotland greet and grane,
And change the green to the black livery.

" A storm shall roar this very hour,
From Ross's hills to Solway sea."—
" Ye lied, ye lied, ye warlock hoar,
For the sun shines sweet on fauld and lee."—

He put his hand on the Earlie's head ;
He show'd him a rock beside the sea,
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Where a king lay stiff beneath his steed,*
And steel-dight nobles wiped their ee.

“The neist curse lights on Branxton hills :
By Flodden’s high and heathery side,
Shall wave a banner red as blude,
And chieftains throng wi’ meikle pride.

“A Scottish King shall come full keen,
The ruddy lion beareth he ;
A feather’d arrow sharp, I ween,
Shall make him wink and warre to see.

“When he is bloody, and all to bledd,
Thus to his men he still shall say—
‘For God’s sake, turn ye back again,
And give yon southern folk a fray !
Why should I lose, the right is mine ?
My doom is not to die this day. †

“Yet turn ye to the eastern hand,
And woe and wonder ye sall see ;
How forty thousand spearman stand,
Where yon rank river meets the sea.

“There shall the lion lose the gylte,
And the libbards ‡ bear it clean away ;
At Pinkyn Cleuch there shall be spilt
Much gentil bluid that day.”—

* King Alexander III., killed by a fall from his horse, near Kinghorn.

† The uncertainty which long prevailed in Scotland, concerning the fate of James IV., is well known.

‡ Leopards of Plantagenet. The Scottish banner is a lion on a field *gules* : the English banner then was the three leopards.

“ Enough, enough, of curse and ban ;
Some blessings show thou now to me,
Or, by the faith o’ my bodie,” Corspatrick said,
“ Ye shall rue the day ye e’er saw me ! ”—

“ The first of blessings I shall thee show,
Is by a burn, that’s call’d of bread ; *
Where Saxon men shall tine the bow,
And find their arrows lack the head.

“ Beside that brigg, out ower that burn,
Where the water bickereth bright and sheen,
Shall many a fallen courser spurn,
And knights shall die in battle keen.

“ Beside a headless cross of stone,
The libbards there shall lose the gree :
The raven shall come, the erne shall go,
And drink the Saxon bluid sae free.
The cross of stone they shall not know,
So thick the corses there shall be.”—

“ But tell me, now,” said brave Dunbar,
“ True Thomas, tell now unto me,
What man shall rule the isle Britain,
Even from the north to the southern sea ? ”—

“ A French Queen shall bear the son, †
Shall rule all Britain to the sea ;
He of the Bruce’s blood shall come,
As near as in the ninth degree.

* *Bannock*, or *Bread Burn*.

† James VI., son of Mary Queen of *France* and *Scotland*.

“ The waters worship shall his race ;
Likewise the waves of the farthest sea ;
For they shall ride over ocean wide,
With hempen bridles, and horse of tree.

PART THIRD (MODERN)

When seven years more were come and gone,
Was war through Scotland spread,
And Ruberslaw show'd high Dunyon *
His beacon blazing red.

Then all by bonny Coldingknow †
Pitch'd palliouns ‡ took their room,
And crested helms, and spears a-rowe,
Glanced gaily through the broom.

The Leader, rolling to the Tweed,
Resounds the ensenzie ; §
They roused the deer from Caddenhead,
To distant Torwoodlee.

The feast was spread in Ercildoune,
In Learmont's high and ancient hall ;
And there were knights of great renown,
And ladies laced in pall.

Nor lack'd they, while they sat at dine,
The music nor the tale,

* Hills near Jedburgh. † A tower near Ercildoune.

§ *Ensenzie*—War-cry, or gathering word.

‡ Tents.

Nor goblets of the blood-red wine,
Nor mantling quaighs * of ale.

True Thomas rose, with harp in hand,
When as the feast was done :
(In minstrel strife, in Fairy Land,
The elfin harp he won.)

Hush'd were the throng, both limb and tongue,
And harpers for envy pale ;
And armed lords lean'd on their swords,
And hearken'd to the tale.

In numbers high, the witching tale
The prophet pour'd along ;
No after bard might e'er avail
Those numbers to prolong.

Yet fragments of the lofty strain
Float down the tide of years.
As, buoyant on the stormy main,
A parted wreck appears.

He sung King Arthur's Table Round :
The Warrior of the Lake ;
How courteous Gawaine met the wound,
And bled for ladies' sake.

But chief, in gentle Tristrem's praise,
The notes melodious swell ;
Was none excell'd in Arthur's days,
The knight of Lionelle.

* *Quaighs*—Wooden cups, composed of staves hooped together.

For Marke, his cowardly uncle's right,
A venom'd wound he bore ;
When fierce Morholde he slew in fight,
Upon the Irish shore.

No art the poison might withstand ;
No medicine could be found,
Till lovely Isolde's lily hand
Had probed the rankling wound.

With gentle hand and soothing tongue
She bore the leech's part ;
And, while she o'er his sick-bed hung,
He paid her with his heart.

O fatal was the gift, I ween !
For, doom'd in evil tide,
The maid must be rude Cornwall's queen,
His cowardly uncle's bride.

Their loves, their woes, the gifted bard,
In fairy tissue wove ;
Where lords, and knights, and ladies bright,
In gay confusion strove.

The Garde Joyeuse, amid the tale,
High rear'd its glittering head ;
And Avalon's enchanted vale
In all its wonders spread.

Brangwain was there, and Segramore,
And fiend-born Merlin's gramarye ;

Of that famed wizard's mighty lore,
O who could sing but he ?

Through many a maze the winning song
In changeful passion led,
Till bent at length the listening throng
O'er Tristrem's dying bed.

His ancient wounds their scars expand,
With agony his heart is wrung :
O where is Isolde's lily hand,
And where her soothing tongue ?

She comes ! she comes !—like flash of flame
Can lovers' footsteps fly :
She comes ! she comes !—she only came
To see her Tristrem die,

She saw him die ; her latest sigh
Join'd in a kiss his parting breath.
The gentlest pair that Britain bare,
United are in death.

There paused the harp : its lingering sound
Died slowly on the ear :
The silent guests still bent around,
For still they seem'd to hear.

Then woe broke forth in murmurs weak ;
Nor ladies heaved alone the sigh ;
But half ashamed, the rugged cheek
Did many a gauntlet dry.

On Leader's stream and Learmont's tower,
The mists of evening close ;
In camp, in castle, or in bower,
Each warrior sought repose.

Lord Douglas, in his lofty tent,
Dream'd o'er the woeful tale ;
When footsteps light, across the bent,
The warrior's ears assail.

He starts, he wakes ;—"What, Richard, ho !
Arise, my page, arise !
What venturous wight, at dead of night,
Dare step where Douglas lies ?"—

Then forth they rush'd : by Leader's tide,
A selcouth * sight they see—
A hart and hind pace side by side,
As white as snow on Fairnalie.

Beneath the moon, with gesture proud,
They stately move and slow ;
Nor scare they at the gathering crowd,
Who marvel as they go.

To Learmont's tower a message sped,
As fast as page might run ;
And Thomas started from his bed,
And soon his clothes did on.

First he woxe pale, and then woxe red ;
Never a word he spake but three ;—

* Wondrous.

“ My sand is run : my thread is spun :
This sign regardeth me.”

The elfin harp his neck around,
In minstrel guise he hung ;
And on the wind, in doleful sound,
Its dying accents rung.

Then forth he went ; yet turn'd him oft
To view his ancient hall :
On the gray tower, in lustre soft,
The autumn moonbeams fall ;

And Leader's waves, like silver sheen,
Danced shimmering in the ray ;
In deepening mass, at distance seen,
Broad Soltra's mountain lay.

“ Farewell, my fathers' ancient tower !
A long farewell,” said he :
“ The scene of pleasure, pomp, or power
Thou never more shalt be.”

“ To Learmont's name no foot of earth
Shall here again belong,
And, on thy hospitable hearth,
The hare shall leave her young.

“ Adieu ! adieu ! ” again he cried,
All as he turned him roun'—
“ Farewell to Leader's silver tide !
Farewell to Ercildoune ! ”

The hart and hind approach'd the place,
As lingering yet he stood ;
And there, before Lord Douglas' face,
With them he cross'd the flood.

Lord Douglas leap'd on his berry-brown steed,
And spurr'd him the Leader o'er ;
But, though he rode with lightning speed,
He never saw them more.

Some said to hill, and some to glen,
Their wondrous course had been ;
But ne'er in haunts of living men
Again was Thomas seen.

SIR WALTER SCOTT.

LA BELLE DAME SANS MERCI

"O what can ail thee, knight-at-arms,
Alone and palely loitering?
The sedge has withered from the lake
And no birds sing.

"O what can ail thee, knight-at-arms!
So haggard and so woe-begone?
The squirrel's granary is full,
And the harvest's done.

"I see a lily on thy brow
With anguish moist and fever-dew,
And on thy cheeks a fading rose
Fast withereth too."

I met a lady in the meads
Full beautiful—a faery's child,
Her hair was long, her foot was light,
And her eyes were wild.

I made a garland for her head,
And bracelets too and fragrant zone;
She look'd at me as she did love,
And made sweet moan.

I set her on my pacing steed
And nothing else saw all day long,
For sideways would she lean and sing
A faery's song.

She found me roots of relish sweet,
And honey wild and manna-dew,

And sure in language strange she said :
 "I love thee true."

She took me to her elfin grot,
 And there she wept and sigh'd full sore ;
And there I shut her wild wild eyes
 With kisses four.

And there she lulled me asleep,
 And there I dream'd—ah, woe betide !
The latest dream I ever dream'd
 On the cold hill side.

I saw pale kings and princes too,
 Pale warriors, death-pale were they all ;
They cried—"La belle Dame sans Merci
 Hath thee in thrall !"

I saw their starved lips in the gloom
 With horrid warning gapèd wide,
And I awoke and found me here
 On the cold hill side.

And this is why I sojourn here
 Alone and palely loitering,
Though the sedge is withered from the lake
 And no birds sing.

KEATS

CHRISTABEL

PART THE FIRST

'TIS the middle of night by the castle clock,
And the owls have awakened the crowing cock ;
Tu—whit !——Tu—whoo !
And hark, again ! the crowing cock,
How drowsily it crew.

Sir Leoline, the Baron rich,
Hath a toothless mastiff, which
From her kennel beneath the rock
Maketh answer to the clock,
Four for the quarters, and twelve for the hour ;
Ever and aye, by shine and shower,
Sixteen short howls, not over loud ;
Some say, she sees my lady's shroud.

Is the night chilly and dark ?
The night is chilly, but not dark.
The thin grey cloud is spread on high,
It covers but not hides the sky.
The moon is behind, and at the full ;
And yet she looks both small and dull.
The night is chill, the cloud is grey :
'Tis a month before the month of May,
And the Spring comes slowly up this way.

The lovely lady, Christabel,
Whom her father loves so well,
What makes her in the wood so late,
A furlong from the castle gate ?
She had dreams all yesternight
Of her own betrothed knight ;

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And she in the midnight wood will pray
For the weal of her lover that's far away.

She stole along, she nothing spoke,
The sighs she heaved were soft and low,
And naught was green upon the oak,
But moss and rarest mistletoe :
She kneels beneath the huge oak tree,
And in silence prayeth she.

The lady sprang up suddenly,
The lovely lady, Christabel !
It moaned as near, as near can be,
But what it is, she cannot tell.—
On the other side it seems to be,
Of the huge, broad-breasted, old oak tree.

The night is chill ; the forest bare ;
Is it the wind that moaneth bleak ?
There is not wind enough in the air
To move away the ringlet curl
From the lovely lady's cheek—
There is not wind enough to twirl
The one red leaf, the last of its clan,
That dances as often as dance it can,
Hanging so light, and hanging so high,
On the topmost twig that looks up at the sky.

Hush beating heart of Christabel !
Jesu, Maria, shield her well !
She folded her arms beneath her cloak,
And stole to the other side of the oak.
What sees she there ?

There she sees a damsel bright,
Drest in a silken robe of white,
That shadowy in the moonlight shone :
The neck that made that white robe wan,
Her stately neck, and arms were bare ;
Her blue-veined feet unsandal'd were
And wildly glittered here and there
The gems entangled in her hair.
I guess, 'twas frightful there to see
A lady so richly clad as she—
Beautiful exceedingly !

Mary mother, save me now !
(Said Christabel,) And who art thou ?

The lady strange made answer meet,
And her voice was faint and sweet :—
Have pity on my sore distress,
I scarce can speak for weariness.
Stretch forth thy hand, and have no fear,
Said Christabel, How camest thou here ?
And the lady, whose voice was faint and sweet,
Did thus pursue her answer meet :—

My sire is of a noble line,
And my name is Geraldine :
Five warriors seized me yesternorn,
Me, even me, a maid forlorn :
They choked my cries with force and fright,
And tied me on a palfrey white.
The palfrey was as fleet as wind,
And they rode furiously behind.

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They spurred amain, their steeds were white ;
And once we crossed the shade of night.
As sure as Heaven shall rescue me,
I have no thought what men they be ;
Nor do I know how long it is
(For I have lain entranced I wis)
Since one, the tallest of the five,
Took me from the palfrey's back,
A weary woman, scarce alive.
Some muttered words his comrades spoke :
He placed me underneath this oak,
He swore they would return with haste ;
Whither they went I cannot tell—
I thought I heard, some minutes past,
Sound as of a castle bell.
Stretch forth thy hand (thus ended she,)
And help a wretched maid to flee.

Then Christabel stretched forth her hand
And comforted fair Geraldine :
O well bright dame may you command
The service of Sir Leoline ;
And gladly our stout chivalry
Will he send forth and friends withall
To guide and guard you safe and free
Home to your noble father's hall.

She rose : and forth with steps they passed
That strove to be, and were not, fast.
Her gracious stars the lady blest,
And thus spake on sweet Christabel ;
All our household are at rest,
The hall as silent as the cell,

Sir Leoline is weak in health
And may not well awakened be,
But we will move as if in stealth
And I beseech your courtesy
This night, to share your couch with me.

They crossed the moat, and Christabel
Took the key that fitted well ;
A little door she opened straight,
All in the middle of the gate ;
The gate that was ironed within and without,
Where an army in battle array had marched out.
The lady sank, belike through pain,
And Christabel with might and main
Lifted her up, a weary weight,
Over the threshold of the gate :
Then the lady rose again,
And moved, as she were not in pain.

So free from danger, free from fear,
They crossed the court : right glad they were.
And Christabel devoutly cried,
To the lady by her side,
Praise we the Virgin all divine
Who hath rescued thee from thy distress !
Alas, alas ! said Geraldine,
I cannot speak for weariness.
So free from danger, free from fear,
They crossed the court : right glad they were.

Outside her kennel, the mastiff old
Lay fast asleep, in moonshine cold.

The mastiff old did not awake,
Yet she an angry moan did make !
And what can ail the mastiff bitch ?
Never till now she uttered yell
Beneath the eye of Christabel.
Perhaps it is the owlet's scritch :
For what can ail the mastiff bitch ?

They passed the hall, that echoes still,
Pass as lightly as you will !
The brands were flat, the brands were dying,
Amid their own white ashes lying ;
But when the lady passed, there came
A tongue of light, a fit of flame ;
And Christabel saw the lady's eye,
And nothing else saw she thereby,
Save the boss of the shield of Sir Leoline tall,
Which hung in a murky old nitch in the wall.
O softly tread, said Christabel,
My father seldom sleepeth well.

Sweet Christabel her feet doth bare
And jealous of the listening air
They steal their way from stair to stair
Now in glimmer, and now in gloom,
And now they pass the Baron's room,
As still as death with stifled breath !
And now have reached her chamber door ;
And now doth Geraldine press down
The rushes of the chamber floor.

The moon shines dim in the open air,
And not a moonbeam enters here.

But they without its light can see
The chamber carved so curiously,
Carved with figures strange and sweet,
All made out of the carver's brain,
For a lady's chamber meet :
The lamp with twofold silver chain
Is fastened to an angel's feet.
The silver lamp burns dead and dim ;
But Christabel the lamp will trim.
She trimmed the lamp, and made it bright,
And left it swinging to and fro,
While Geraldine, in wretched plight,
Sank down upon the floor below.

O weary lady, Geraldine,
I pray you, drink this cordial wine !
It is a wine of virtuous powers ;
My mother made it of wild flowers.
And will your mother pity me,
Who am a maiden most forlorn ?
Christabel answered—Woe is me !
She died the hour that I was born.
I have heard the grey-haired friar tell,
How on her death-bed she did say,
That she should hear the castle bell
Strike twelve upon my wedding day.
O mother dear ! that thou wert here !
I would, said Geraldine, she were !

But soon with altered voice, she said—
“ Off, wandering mother ! Peak and pine !
“ I have power to bid thee flee.”
Alas ! what ails poor Geraldine ?

Why stares she with unsettled eye ?
Can she the bodiless dead espy ?
And why with hollow voice cries she,
"Off woman, off ! this hour is mine—
"Though thou her guardian spirit be,
"Off, woman, off ! 'tis given to me."

Then Christabel knelt by the lady's side,
And raised to heaven her eyes so blue—
Alas ! said she, this ghastly ride—
Dear lady ! it hath wildered you !
The lady wiped her moist cold brow,
And faintly said, "'tis over now !"

Again the wild-flower wine she drank ;
Her fair large eyes 'gan glitter bright,
And from the floor whereon she sank,
The lofty lady stood upright ;
She was most beautiful to see,
Like a lady of a far countrée.

And thus the lofty lady spake—
All they, who live in the upper sky,
Do love you, holy Christabel !
And you love them, and for their sake
And for the good which me befel,
Even I in my degree will try,
Fair maiden, to requite you well.
But now unrobe yourself ; for I
Must pray, ere yet in bed I lie.

Quoth Christabel, so let it be !
And as the lady bade, did she.

Her gentle limbs did she undress,
And lay down in her loveliness.
But through her brain of weal and woe
So many thoughts moved to and fro,
That vain it were her lids to close ;
So half-way from the bed she rose,
And on her elbow did recline
To look at the lady Geraldine.

Beneath the lamp the lady bowed,
And slowly rolled her eyes around ;
Then drawing in her breath aloud,
Like one that shuddered, she unbound
The cincture from beneath her breast :
Her silken robe, and inner vest,
Dropt to her feet, and full in view,
Behold ! her bosom and half her side——
A sight to dream of, not to tell !
O shield her ! shield sweet Christabel !

Yet Geraldine nor speaks or stirs :
Ah ! what a stricken look was hers !
Deep from within she seems half-way
To lift some weight with sick assay,
And eyes the maid and seeks delay ;
Then suddenly as one defied
Collects herself in scorn and pride,
And lay down by the Maiden's side !—
And in her arms the maid she took,
 Ah wel-a-day !
And with low voice and doleful look
These words did say :
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In the touch of this bosom there worketh a spell,
Which is lord of thy utterance, Christabel !
Thou knowest to-night, and wilt know to-morrow
This mark of my shame, this seal of my sorrow ;
 But vainly thou warrest,
 For this is alone in
 Thy power to declare,
 That in the dim forest
 Thou heardest a low moaning,
And foundest a bright lady, surpassingly fair :
And didst bring her home with thee in love and in charity,
To shield her and shelter her from the damp air.

THE CONCLUSION TO PART THE FIRST

It was a lovely sight to see
The lady Christabel, when she
Was praying at the old oak tree.
 Amid the jagged shadows
 Of mossy leafless boughs,
 Kneeling in the moonlight,
 To make her gentle vows ;
Her slender palms together prest,
Heaving sometimes on her breast ;
Her face resigned to bliss or bale—
Her face, oh call it fair not pale,
And both blue eyes more bright than clear,
Each about to have a tear.

With open eyes (ah woe is me !)
Asleep, and dreaming fearfully,
Fearfully dreaming, yet I wis,
Dreaming that alone, which is—

O sorrow and shame ! Can this be she,
The lady, who knelt at the old oak tree ?
And lo ! the worker of these harms,
That holds the maiden in her arms,
Seems to slumber still and mild,
As a mother with her child.

A star hath set, a star hath risen,
O Geraldine ! since arms of thine
Have been the lovely lady's prison.
O Geraldine ! one hour was thine—
Thou'st had thy will ! By tairn and rill,
The night-birds all that hour were still.
But now they are jubilant anew,
From cliff and tower, tu—whoo ! tu—whoo !
Tu—whoo ! tu—whoo ! from wood and fell !

And see ! the lady Christabel
Gathers herself from out her trance ;
Her limbs relax, her countenance
Grows sad and soft ; the smooth thin lids
Close o'er her eyes ; and tears she sheds—
Large tears that leave the lashes bright !
And oft the while she seems to smile
As infants at a sudden light !
Yea, she doth smile, and she doth weep,
Like a youthful hermitess,
Beauteous in a wilderness,
Who, praying always, prays in sleep.
And, if she move unquietly,
Perchance, 'tis but the blood so free,
Comes back and tingles in her feet.
No doubt, she hath a vision sweet.

What if her guardian spirit 'twere,
What if she knew her mother near ?
But this she knows, in joys and woes,
That saints will aid if men will call :
For the blue sky bends over all !

Each matin bell, the Baron saith,
Knells us back to a world of death.
These words Sir Leoline first said,
When he rose and found his lady dead :
These words Sir Leoline will say,
Many a morn to his dying day,
And hence the custom and law began,
That still at dawn the sacristan,
Who duly pulls the heavy bell,
Five and forty beads must tell
Between his stroke—a warning knell,
Which not a soul can choose but hear
From Bratha Head to Wyndermere.

Saith Bracy the bard, So let it knell !
And let the drowsy sacristan
Still count as slowly as he can !
There is no lack of such, I ween
As well fill up the space between.
In Langdale Pike and Witch's Lair,
And Dungeon-ghyll so foully rent,
With ropes of rock and bells of air
Three sinful sextons' ghosts are pent,
Who all give back, one after t'other,
The death-note to their living brother ;
And oft too, by the knell offended,

Just as their one ! two ! three ! is ended,
The devil mocks the doleful tale
With a merry peal from Borrowdale.

The air is still ! through mist and cloud
That merry peal comes ringing loud ;
And Geraldine shakes off her dread,
And rises lightly from the bed ;
Puts on her silken vestments white,
And tricks her hair in lovely plight,
And nothing doubting of her spell
Awakens the lady Christabel.
“Sleep you, sweet lady Christabel ?
“I trust that you have rested well.”

And Christabel awoke and spied
The same who lay down by her side—
O rather say, the same whom she
Raised up beneath the old oak tree !
Nay, fairer yet ! and yet more fair !
For she belike hath drunken deep
Of all the blessedness of sleep !

COLERIDGE

RAPUNZEL

THE PRINCE, *being in the wood near the tower,
in the evening.*

I COULD not even think
What made me weep that day,
When out of the council-hall
The courtiers pass'd away,—

The Witch.

Rapunzel, Rapunzel,
Let down your hair !

Rapunzel.

Is it not true that every day
She climbeth up the same strange way,
Her scarlet cloak spread broad and gay
Over my golden hair ?

The Prince.

And left me there alone,
To think on what they said ;
"Thou art a king's own son,
'Tis fit that thou should'st wed."

The Witch.

Rapunzel, Rapunzel,
Let down your hair !

Rapunzel.

When I undo the knotted mass,
Fathoms below the shadows pass
Over my hair along the grass,
O my golden hair !

The Prince.

I put my armour on,
Thinking on what they said ;
"Thou art a king's own son,
'Tis fit that thou should'st wed."

The Witch.

Rapunzel, Rapunzel,
Let down your hair !

Rapunzel.

See on the marble parapet,
I lean my brow, strive to forget
That fathoms below my hair grows wet
With the dew, my golden hair.

The Prince.

I rode throughout the town,
Men did not bow the head,
Though I was the king's own son ;
"He rides to dream," they said.

The Witch.

Rapunzel, Rapunzel,
Wind up your hair !

Rapunzel.

See on the marble parapet,
The faint red stains with tears are wet ;
The long years pass, no help comes yet
To free my golden hair.

The Prince.

For leagues and leagues I rode,
Till hot my armour grew,

Till underneath the leaves
I felt the evening dew.

The Witch.

Rapunzel, Rapunzel,
Weep through your hair !

Rapunzel.

And yet—but I am growing old,
For want of love my heart is cold,
Years pass, the while I loose and fold
The fathoms of my hair.

THE PRINCE, in the morning.

I have heard tales of men, who in the night
Saw paths of stars let down to earth from heaven,
Who follow'd them until they reach'd the light
Wherein they dwell, whose sins are all forgiven ;

But who went backward when they saw the gate
Of diamond, nor dared to enter in ;
All their life long they were content to wait,
Purging them patiently of every sin.

I must have had a dream of some such thing,
And now am just awakening from that dream ;
For even in grey dawn those strange words ring
Through heart and brain, and still I see that gleam.

For in my dream at sunset-time I lay
Beneath these beeches, mail and helmet off,

Right full of joy that I had come away
From court ; for I was patient of the scoff

That met me always there from day to day,
From any knave or coward of them all ;
I was content to live that wretched way ;
For truly till I left the council-hall,

And rode forth arm'd beneath the burning sun
My gleams of happiness were faint and few,
But then I saw my real life had begun,
And that I should be strong quite well I knew

For I was riding out to look for love,
Therefore the birds within the thickets sung,
Even in hot noontide, as I pass'd, above
The elms o'ersway'd with longing towards me hung.

Now some few fathoms from the place where I
Lay in the beechwood, was a tower fair,
The marble corners faint against the sky ;
And dreamily I wonder'd what lived there :

Because it seem'd a dwelling for a queen,
No belfry for the swinging of great bells ;
No bolt or stone had ever crush'd the green
Shafts, amber and rose walls, no soot that tells

Of the Norse torches burning up the roofs,
On the flower-carven marble could I see ;
But rather on all sides I saw the proofs
Of a great loneliness that sicken'd me ;

Making me feel a doubt that was not fear,
Whether my whole life long had been a dream,
And I should wake up soon in some place, where
The piled-up arms of the fighting angels gleam ;

Not born as yet, but going to be born,
No naked baby as I was at first,
But an armed knight, whom fire, hate and scorn
Could turn from nothing : my heart almost burst

Beneath the beeches, as I lay a-dreaming,
I tried so hard to read this riddle through,
To catch some golden cord that I saw gleaming
Like gossamer against the autumn blue.

But while I ponder'd these things, from the wood
There came a black-hair'd woman, tall and bold,
Who strode straight up to where the tower stood,
And cried out shrilly words, whereon behold—

THE WITCH, *from the tower.*

Rapunzel, Rapunzel,
Let down your hair !

THE PRINCE.

Ah Christ ! it was no dream then, but there stood
(She comes again) a maiden passing fair,
Against the roof, with face turn'd to the wood ;
Bearing within her arms waves of her yellow hair.

I read my riddle when I saw her stand,
Poor love ! her face quite pale against her hair,

Praying to all the leagues of empty land
To save her from the woe she suffer'd there.

To think ! they trod upon her golden hair
In the witches' sabbaths ; it was a delight
For these foul things, while she, with thin feet bare,
Stood on the roof upon the winter night,

To plait her dear hair into many plaits,
And then, while God's eye look'd upon the thing,
In the very likenesses of Devil's bats,
Upon the ends of her long hair to swing.

And now she stood above the parapet.
And, spreading out her arms, let her hair flow,
Beneath that veil her smooth white forehead set
Upon the marble, more I do not know ;

Because before my eyes a film of gold
Floated, as now it floats. O, unknown love,
Would that I could thy yellow stair behold,
If still thou standest with lead roof above !

THE WITCH, *as she passes.*

Is there any who will dare
To climb up the yellow stair ?
Glorious Rapunzel's golden hair ?

THE PRINCE.

If it would please God make you sing again,
I think that I might very sweetly die,
My soul somehow reach heaven in joyous pain,
My heavy body on the beech-nuts lie.

Now I remember ; what a most strange year,
Most strange and awful, in the beechen wood
I have pass'd now ; I still have a faint fear
It is a kind of dream not understood.

I have seen no one in this wood except
The witch and her ; have heard no human tones,
But when the witches' revelry has crept
Between the very jointing of my bones.

Ah ! I know now ; I could not go away,
But needs must stop to hear her sing that song
She always sings at dawning of the day.
I am not happy here, for I am strong,

And every morning do I whet my sword,
Yet Rapunzel still weeps within the tower,
And still God ties me down to the green sward,
Because I cannot see the gold stair floating lower.

RAPUNZEL sings from the tower.

My mother taught me prayers
To say when I had need ;
I have so many cares,
That I can take no heed
Of many words in them ;
But I remember this :
Christ, bring me to thy bliss,
Mary, maid withouten wem,
Keep me ! I am lone, I wis,
Yet besides I have made this
By myself : *Give me a kiss,*
Dear God, dwelling up in heaven !

*Also : Send me a true knight,
Lord Christ, with a steel sword, bright,
Broad, and trenchant ; yea, and seven
Spans from hilt to point, O Lord !
And let the handle of his sword
Be gold on silver, Lord in heaven !
Such a sword as I see gleam
Sometimes, when they let me dream.*

*Yea, besides, I have made this :
Lord, give Mary a dear kiss,
And let gold Michael, who look'd down,
When I was here, on Rouen town
From the spire, bring me that kiss
On a lily ! Lord do this !*

*These prayers on the dreadful nights,
When the witches plait my hair,
And the fearfulest of sights
On the earth and in the air,
Will not let me close my eyes,
I murmur often, mix'd with sighs,
That my weak heart will not hold
At some things that I behold.
Nay, not sighs, but quiet groans,
That swell out the little bones
Of my bosom ; till a trance
God sends in middle of that dance,
And I behold the countenance
Of Michael, and can feel no more
The bitter east wind biting sore
My naked feet ; can see no more*

The crayfish on the leaden floor,
That mock with feeler and grim claw.

Yea, often in that happy trance,
Beside the blessed countenance
Of golden Michael, on the spire
Glowing all crimson in the fire
Of sunset, I behold a face,
Which sometime, if God give me grace,
May kiss me in this very place.

Evening in the tower.

Rapunzel.

It grows half way between the dark and light ;
Love, we have been six hours here alone,
I fear that she will come before the night,
And if she finds us thus we are undone.

The Prince.

Nay, draw a little nearer, that your breath
May touch my lips, let my cheek feel your arm ;
Now tell me, did you ever see a death,
Or ever see a man take mortal harm ?

Rapunzel.

Once came two knights and fought with swords below,
And while they fought I scarce could look at all,
My head swam so, after a moaning low
Drew my eyes down ; I saw against the wall

One knight lean dead, bleeding from head and breast,
Yet seem'd it like a line of poppies red
In the golden twilight, as he took his rest,
In the dusky time he scarcely seemed dead.

But the other, on his face six paces off,
Lay moaning, and the old familiar name
He mutter'd through the grass, seem'd like a scoff
Of some lost soul remembering his past fame. }

His helm all dinted lay beside him there,
The visor-bars were twisted towards the face,
The crest, which was a lady very fair,
Wrought wonderfully was shifted from its place.

The shower'd mail-rings on the speed-walk lay,
Perhaps my eyes were dazzled with the light
That blazed in the west, yet surely on that day
Some crimson thing had changed the grass from
bright

Pure green I love so. But the knight who died
Lay there for days after the other went ;
Until one day I heard a voice that cried,
“Fair knight, I see Sir Robert we were sent

“To carry dead or living to the king.”
So the knights came and bore him straight away
On their lance truncheons, such a batter'd thing,
His mother had not known him on that day,

But for his helm-crest, a gold lady fair
Wrought wonderfully.

The Prince.

Ah, they were brothers then,
And often rode together, doubtless where
The swords were thickest, and were loyal men,
Until they fell in these same evil dreams.

Rapunzel.

Yea, love ; but shall we not depart from hence ?
The white moon groweth golden fast, and gleams
Between the aspen stems ; I fear—and yet a sense

Of fluttering victory comes over me,
That will not let me fear aright ; my heart—
Feel how it beats, love, strives to get to thee,
I breathe so fast that my lips needs must part ;
Your breath swims round my mouth, but let us go.

The Prince.

I, Sebald, also, pluck from off the staff
The crimson banner, let it lie below,
Above it in the wind let grasses laugh.

Now let us go, love, down the winding stair,
With fingers intertwined : ay, feel my sword !
I wrought it long ago, with golden hair
Flowing about the hilts, because a word,

Sung by a minstrel old, had set me dreaming
Of a sweet bow'd down face with yellow hair,
Betwixt green leaves I used to see it gleaming,
A half smile on the lips, though lines of care

Had sunk the cheeks, and made the great eyes hollow ;
What other work in all the world had I,
But through all turns of fate that face to follow ?
But wars and business kept me there to die.

O child, I should have slain my brother, too,
My brother, Love, lain moaning in the grass,
Had I not ridden out to look for you,
When I had watch'd the gilded courtiers pass

From the golden hall. But it is strange your name
Is not the same the minstrel sung of yore ;
You call'd it Rapunzel, 'tis not the name.
See, love the stems shine though the open door.

Morning in the woods.

Rapunzel.

O Love ! me and my unknown name you have well
won ;
The witch's name was Rapunzel ; eh ! not so sweet ?
No !—but is this real grass, love, that I tread upon ?
What call they these blue flowers that lean across my
feet ?

The Prince.

Dip down your dear face in the dewy grass, O love !
And ever let the sweet slim harebells, tenderly hung,
Kiss both your parted lips ; and I will hang above,
And try to sing that song the dreamy harper sung.

He sings.

'Twixt the sunlight and the shade
Float up memories of my maid,
God, remember Guendolen !

Gold or gems she did not wear,
But her yellow rippled hair,
Like a veil, hid Guendolen !

'Twixt the sunlight and the shade,
My rough hands so strangely made,
Folded Golden Guendolen ;

Hands used to grip the sword-hilt hard,
Framed her face, while on the sward
Tears fell down from Guendolen.

Guendolen now speaks no word,
Hands fold round about the sword.
Now no more of Guendolen.

Only 'twixt the light and shade
Floating memories of my maid
Make me pray for Guendolen.

Guendolen.

I kiss thee, new-found name ; but I will never go :
Your hands need never grip the hammer'd sword
again,
But all my golden hair shall ever round you flow,
Between the light and shade from Golden Guendolen.

Afterwards in the palace.

King Sebald.

I took my armour off,
Put on king's robes of gold,
Over the kirtle green
The gold fell fold on fold.

THE WITCH, out of hell.

*Guendolen ! Guendolen !
One lock of hair.*

Guendolen.

I am so glad, for every day
He kisses me much the same way
As in the tower : under the sway
Of all my golden hair.

King Sebald.

We rode throughout the town,
A gold crown on my head.
Through all the gold-hung streets,
" Praise God !" the people said.

The Witch.

*Guendolen ! Guendolen !
Lend me your hair !*

Guendolen.

Verily, I seem like one
Who, when day is almost done,
Through a thick wood meets the sun
That blazes in her hair.

King Sebald.

Yea, at the palace gates,
"Praise God !" the great knights said,
"For Sebald the high king,
And the lady's golden head."

The Witch.

*Woe is me ! Guendolen
Sweeps back her hair.*

Guendolen.

Nothing wretched now, no screams ;
I was unhappy once in dreams,
And even now a harsh voice seems
To hang about my hair.

The Witch.

WOE ! THAT ANY MAN COULD DARE
TO CLIMB UP THE YELLOW STAIR,
GLORIOUS GUENDOLEN'S GOLDEN HAIR.

WILLIAM MORRIS

THE LADY OF SHALOTT

ON either side the river lie
Long fields of barley and of rye,
That clothe the wold and meet the sky ;
And thro' the field the road runs by
 To many-tower'd Camelot ;
And up and down the people go,
Gazing where the lilies blow,
Round an island there below,
 The island of Shalott.

Willows whiten, aspens quiver,
Little breezes dusk and shiver
Thro' the wave that runs for ever
By the island in the river
 Flowing down to Camelot.
Four gray walls, and four gray towers,
Overlook a space of flowers,
And the silent isle imbowers
 The Lady of Shalott.

By the margin, willow-veil'd,
Slide the heavy barges trail'd
By slow horses ; and unhail'd
The shallop flitteth silken-sail'd
 Skimming down to Camelot :
But who hath seen her wave her hand ?
Or at the casement seen her stand ?
Or is she known in all the land,
 The Lady of Shalott ?

Only reapers, reaping early
In among the bearded barley,
Hear a song that echoes cheerly
From the river winding clearly,
 Down to tower'd Camelot :
And by the moon the reaper weary,
Piling sheaves in uplands airy,
Listening, whispers "'Tis the fairy
 Lady of Shalott."

ALFRED LORD TENNYSON



THE DEAD PRINCESS

TOO late for love, too late for joy,
Too late, too late !
You loitered on the road too long,
You trifled at the gate ;
The enchanted dove upon her branch
Died without a mate ;
The enchanted princess in her tower
Slept, died, behind the grate ;
Her heart was starving all this while
You made it wait.

Ten years ago, five years ago,
One year ago,
Even then you had arrived in time,
Though somewhat slow ;
Then you had known her living face,
Which now you cannot know ;
The frozen fountain would have leaped,
The buds gone on to blow,
The warm south wind would have awaked
To melt the snow.

CHRISTINA ROSSETTI

(From the "Prince's Progress")

THE DAY-DREAM

THE SLEEPING PALACE

I

THE varying year with blade and sheaf
Clothes and reclothes the happy plains,
Here rests the sap within the leaf,
Here stays the blood along the veins.
Faint shadows, vapours lightly curl'd,
Faint murmurs from the meadows come,
Like hints and echoes of the world
To spirits folded in the womb.

II

Soft lustre bathes the range of urns
On every slanting terrace-lawn.
The fountain to his place returns
Deep in the garden lake withdrawn.
Here droops the banner on the tower,
On the hall-hearths the festal fires,
The peacock in his laurel bower,
The parrot in his gilded wires.

III

Roof-haunting martins warm their eggs :
In these, in those the life is stay'd
The mantles from the golden pegs
Droop sleepily : no sound is made,
Not even of a gnat that sings.
More like a picture seemeth all
Than those old portraits of old kings,
That watch the sleepers from the wall.

IV

Here sits the Butler with a flask
 Between his knees, half drained ; and there
 The wrinkled steward at his task,
 The maid-of-honour blooming fair ;
 The page has caught her hand in his :
 Her lips are sever'd as to speak :
 His own are pouted to a kiss :
 The blush is fix'd upon her cheek.

V

Till all the hundred summers pass,
 The beams, that thro' the Oriel shine,
 Make prisms in every carven glass,
 And beaker brimm'd with noble wine,
 Each baron at the banquet sleeps
 Grave faces gather'd in a ring.
 His state the king reposing keeps.
 He must have been a jovial king.

VI

All round a hedge upshoots and shows
 At distance like a little wood ;
 Thorns, ivies, woodbine, mistletoes,
 And grapes with bunches as red as blood ;
 All creeping plants, a wall of green
 Close-matted, bur and brake and briar,
 And glimpsing over these, just seen,
 High up, the topmost palace spire.

VII

When will the hundred summers die,
And thought and time be born again,
And newer knowledge, drawing nigh,
Bring truth that sways the soul of men ?
Here all things in their place remain,
As all were order'd ages since.
Come, Care and Pleasure, Hope and Pain,
And bring the fated fairy Prince.

THE SLEEPING BEAUTY

I

YEAR after year unto her feet,
She lying on her couch alone,
Across the purple coverlet,
The maiden's jet-black hair has grown,
On either side her trancéd form
Forth streaming from a braid of pearl
The slumbrous light is rich and warm,
And moves not on the rounded curl.

II

The silk star-broider'd coverlid
Unto her limbs itself doth mould
Languidly ever ; and, amid
Her full black ringlets downward roll'd,

Glows forth each softly-shadow'd arm
With bracelets of the diamond bright
Her constant beauty doth inform
Stillness with love, and day with light.

III

She sleeps : her breathings are not heard
In palace chambers far apart.
The fragrant tresses are not stirr'd
That lie upon her charmed heart.
She sleeps : on either hand upwells
The gold-fringed pillow lightly prest :
She sleeps, nor dreams, but ever dwells
A perfect form in perfect rest.

THE ARRIVAL

I

ALL precious things, discover'd late,
To those that seek them issue forth ;
For love in sequel works with fate,
And draws the veil from hidden worth.
He travels far from other skies—
His mantle glitters on the rocks—
A fairy Prince, with joyful eyes,
And lighter-footed than the fox.

II

The bodies and the bones of those
 That strove in other days to pass,
 Are withered in the thorny close,
 Or scattered blanching on the grass.
 He gazes on the silent dead :
 " They perish'd in their daring deeds "
 This proverb flashes thro' his head,
 " The many fail : the one succeeds."

III

He comes, scare knowing what he seeks.
 He breaks the hedge : he enters there :
 The colour flies into his cheeks :
 He trusts to light on something fair ;
 For all his life this charm did talk
 About his path, and hover near
 With words of promise in his walk,
 And whispered voices in his ear.

IV

More close and close his footsteps wind :
 The Magic Music in his heart
 Beats quick and quicker, till he find
 The quiet chamber far apart.
 His spirit flutters like a lark,
 He stoops—to kiss her—on his knee.
 " Love, if thy tresses be so dark,
 How dark those hidden eyes must be ! "

THE REVIVAL

I

A TOUCH, a kiss ! the charm was snapt
There rose a noise of striking clocks,
And feet that ran, and doors that clapt,
And barking dogs, and crowing cocks ;
A fuller light illumined all,
A breeze thro' all the garden swept,
A sudden hubbub shook the hall,
And sixty feet the fountain leapt.

II

The hedge broke in, the banner blew,
The butler drank, the steward scrawl'd,
The fire shot up, the martin flew,
The parrot scream'd, the peacock squall'd,
The maid and page renew'd their strife,
The palace bang'd, and buzz'd and clackt,
And all the long-pent stream of life
Dash'd downward in a cataract.

III

And last with these the king awoke,
And in his chair himself uprear'd,
And yawn'd, and rubb'd his face, and spoke,
"By holy rood, a royal beard !
How say you ? we have slept, my lords
My beard has grown into my lap."
The barons swore, with many words,
'Twas but an after-dinner's nap.

"Pardy," return'd the king, "but still
 My joints are somewhat stiff or so.
 My lord, and shall we pass the bill
 I mention'd half an hour ago?"
 The chancellor, sedate and vain,
 In courteous words return'd reply :
 But dallied with his golden chain,
 And, smiling, put the question by.

THE DEPARTURE

I

AND on her lover's arm she leant,
 And round her waist she felt it fold,
 And far across the hills they went
 In that new world which is the old ;
 Across the hills, and far away
 Beyond their utmost purple rim,
 And deep into the dying day
 The happy princess followed him.

II

"I'd sleep another hundred years,
 O love, for such another kiss ;"
 "O wake for ever," love, she hears,
 "O love, 'twas such as this and this."

And o'er them many a sliding star,
And many a merry wind was borne,
And, stream'd thro' many a golden bar,
The twilight melted into morn.

III

"O eyes long laid in happy sleep!"
"O happy sleep, that lightly fled!"
"O happy kiss, that woke thy sleep!"
"O love, thy kiss would wake the dead!"
And o'er them many a flowing range
Of vapour buoy'd the crescent bark,
And, rapt thro' many a rosy change,
The twilight died into the dark.

IV

"A hundred summers! can it be?
And whither goest thou, tell me where?"
"O seek my father's court with me,
For there are greater wonders there."
And o'er the hills, and far away
Beyond their utmost purple rim,
Beyond the night, across the day,
Thro' all the world she follow'd him.

ALFRED LORD TENNYSON.

AIRY MOUNTAIN AND RUSHY GLEN



THE FAIRIES

UP the airy mountain,
Down the rushy glen,
We daren't go a-hunting
For fear of little men ;
Wee folk, good folk,
Trooping all together ;
Geeen jacket, red cap,
And white owl's feather !

Down along the rocky shore
Some make their home,
They live on crispy pancakes
Of yellow tide foam ;
Some in the reeds
Of the black mountain lake,
With frogs for their watch-dogs,
All night awake.

High on the hill-top
The old king sits ;
He is now so old and gray
He's nigh lost his wits.
With a bridge of white mist
Columkill he crosses,
On his stately journeys
From Slieveleague to Rosses :
Or going up with music
On cold starry nights,
To sup with the Queen
Of the gay Northern Lights.

They stole little Bridget
For seven years long ;
When she came down again
Her friends were all gone.
They took her lightly back,
Between the night and morrow,
They thought that she was fast asleep,
But she was dead with sorrow.
They have kept her ever since
Deep within the lake,
On a bed of flag-leaves
Watching till she wake.

By the craggy hill-side,
Through the mosses bare,
They have planted thorn-trees
For pleasure here and there.
Is any man so daring
As dig them up in spite,
He shall find their sharpest thorns
In his bed at night.

Up the airy mountain,
Down the rushy glen,
We daren't go a-hunting
For fear of little men ;
Wee folk, good folk,
Trooping all together ;
Green jacket, red cap,
And white owl's feather !

WILLIAM ALLINGHAM

THE FAIRY THORN—AN ULSTER BALLAD

GET up, our Anna dear, from the weary spinning-wheel ;

“For your father’s on the hill, and your mother is asleep ;

Come up above the crags, and we’ll dance a Highland reel

Around the fairy thorn on the steep.”

At Anna Grace’s door ’twas thus the maidens cried,

Three merry maidens fair in kirtles of the green ;

And Anna laid the rock and the weary wheel aside—

The fairest of the four, I ween.

They’re glancing through the glimmer of the quiet eve,

Away in milky wavings of neck and ankle bare ;

The heavy-sliding stream in its sleepy song they leave,

And the crags in the ghostly air.

And linking hand in hand, and singing as they go,

The maids along the hillside have ta’en their fearless way,

Till they come to where the rowan trees in lonely beauty grow

Beside the Fairy Hawthorn grey.

The Hawthorn stands between the ashes tall and slim,

Like matron with her twin grand-daughters at her knee ;

The rowan berries cluster o’er her low head grey and dim,

In ruddy kisses sweet to see.

The merry maidens four have ranged them in a row,
Between each lovely couple a stately rowan stem,
And away in mazes wavy, like skimming birds they go,
Oh, never carolled bird like them !

But solemn is the silence of the silvery haze
That drinks away their voices in echoless repose,
And dreamily the evening has stilled the haunted braes,
And dreamier the gloaming grows.

And sinking one by one, like lark-notes from the sky
When the falcon's shadow saileth across the open shaw,
Are hushed the maidens' voices, as cowering down they lie
In the flutter of their sudden awe.

For, from the air above and the grassy ground beneath,
And from the mountain-ashes and the old white-thorn
between,
A power of faint enchantment doth through their beings
breathe,
And they sink down together on the green.

They sink together silent, and, stealing side to side,
They fling their lovely arms o'er their drooping necks
so fair ;
Then vainly strive again their naked arms to hide,
For their shrinking necks again are bare.

Thus clasped and prostrate all, with their heads together
bowed,
Softo'er their bosoms beating—the only human sound—
They hear the silky footsteps of the silent fairy crowd,
Like a river in the air gliding round.

Nor scream can any raise, nor prayer can any say,
But wild, wild the terror of the speechless three ;
For they feel fair Anna Grace drawn silently away—
By whom, they dare not look to see.

They feel her tresses twine with their parting locks of
gold,
And the curls elastic falling, as her head withdraws,
They feel her sliding arms from their tranced arms
unfold,
But they dare not look to see the cause.

For heavy on their senses the faint enchantment lies
Through all that night of anguish and perilous
amaze ;
And neither fear nor wonder can ope their quivering
eyes
Or their limbs from the cold ground raise.

Till out of Night the Earth has rolled her dewy side,
With every haunted mountain and streamy vale
below ;
When, as the mist dissolves in the yellow morning-tide,
The maidens' trance dissolveth so.

They fly the ghastly three as swiftly as they may,
And tell their tale of sorrow to anxious friends in
vain—
They pined away and died within the year and day,
And ne'er was Anna Grace seen again.

SIR SAMUEL FERGUSON.

THE HILLS OF RUEL

"OVER the hills and far away"—
That is the tune I heard one day,
When heather-drowsy I lay and listened
And watched where the stealthy sea-tide glistened.

Beside me there on the Hills of Ruel
An old man stooped and gathered fuel—
And I asked him this: if his son were dead,
As the folk in Glendaruel all said,
How could he still believe that never
Duncan had crossed the shadowy river.

Forth from his breast the old man drew
A lute that once on a rowan-tree grew:
And, speaking no words, began to play
"Over the hills and far away."

"But how do you know," I said, thereafter,
"That Duncan has heard the fairy laughter?
How do you know he has followed the cruel
Honey-sweet folk of the Hills of Ruel?"
"How do I know?" the old man said,
Sure I knew well my boy's not dead:
For late on the morrow they hid him, there
Where the black earth moistens his yellow hair.
I saw him alow on the moor close by,
I watched him low on the hillside lie,
An' I heard him laughin' wild up there,
An' talk, talk, talkin' beneath his hair—
For down o'er his face his long hair lay
But I saw it was cold and ashy grey.

Ay, laughin' and talkin' wild he was,
An' that to a Shadow out on the grass,
A Shadow that made my blood go chill,
For never its like have I seen on the hill.
An' the moon came up, and the stars grew white,
An' the hills grew black in the bloom o' the night,
An' I watched till the death-star sank in the moon
And the moonmaid fled with her moonwhite shoon,
Then the Shadow that was on the moorside there
Rose up and shook its shadowy hair,
And Duncan he laughed no more, but grey
As the rainy dust of a rainy day,
Went over the hills and far away."

"Over the hills and far away"—
That is the tune I heard one day.
O that I too might hear the cruel
Honey-sweet folk of the Hills of Ruel.

FIONA MACLEOD

GOBLIN MARKET

MORNING and evening
Maids heard the goblins cry
"Come buy our orchard fruits,
Come buy, come buy :
Apples and quinces,
Lemons and oranges,
Plump unpecked cherries,
Melons and raspberries,
Bloom-down-cheeked peaches
Swart-headed mulberries,
Wild free-born cranberries,
Crab-apples, dewberries,
Pine-apples, blackberries,
Apricots, strawberries ;
All ripe together
In summer weather,—
Morns that pass by,
Fair eyes that fly ;
Come buy, come buy :
Our grapes fresh from the vine.
Pomegranates full and fine,
Dates and sharp bullaces.
Rare pears and greengages,
Damsons and bilberries,
Taste them and try :
Currants and gooseberries,
Bright-fire-like barberries,
Figs to fill your mouth,
Citrons from the South,
Sweet to tongue and sound to eye :
Come buy, come buy."

Evening by evening
Among the brookside rushes,
Laura bowed her head to hear,
Lizzie veiled her blushes :
Crouching close together
In the cooling weather,
With clasping arms and cautioning lips,
With tingling cheeks and finger tips.
"Lie close," Laura said,
Pricking up her golden head :
"We must not look at goblin head,
We must not buy their fruits :
Who knows upon what soil they fed
Their hungry thirsty roots ?"
"Come buy," call the goblins
Hobbling down the glen.
"Oh," cried Lizzie, "Laura, Laura,
You should not peep at goblin men."
Lizzie covered up her eyes,
Covered close lest they should look ;
Laura reared her glossy head,
And whispered like the restless brook :
"Look, Lizzie, look, Lizzie,
Down the glen tramp little men.
One hauls a basket,
One bears a plate, •
One lugs a golden dish
Of many pounds weight.
How fair the vine must grow
Whose grapes are so luscious ;
How warm the wind must blow
Through those fruit bushes."
"No," said Lizzie : "No, no, no ;

Their offers should not charm us,
Their evil gifts would harm us."
She thrust a dimpled finger
In each ear, shut eyes and ran :
Curious Laura chose to linger
Wondering at each merchant man.
One had a cat's face,
One whisked a tail,
One tramped at a rat's pace,
One crawled like a snail,
One like a wombat prowled obtuse and furry
One like a ratel tumbled hurry skurry.
She heard a voice like voice of doves
Cooing all together :
They sounded kind and full of loves
In the pleasant weather.

Laura stretched her gleaming neck
Like a rush-imbedded swan,
Like a lily from the beck,
Like a moonlit poplar branch,
Like a vessel at the launch
When its last restraint is gone.

Backwards up the mossy glen *
Turned and trooped the goblin men,
With their shrill repeated cry,
"Come buy, come buy."
When they reached where Laura was
They stood stock still upon the moss.
Leering at each other,
Brother with queer brother ;

Signalling each other,
Brother with sly brother.
One set his basket down,
One reared his plate ;
One began to weave a crown
Of tendrils, leaves, and rough nuts brown
(Men sell not such in any town) ;
One heaved the golden weight
Of dish and fruit to offer her :
"Come buy, come buy," was still their cry
Laura stared but did not stir,
Longed but had no money :
The whisk-tailed merchant bade her taste
In tones as smooth as honey,
The cat-faced purr'd,
The rat-paced spoke a word
Of welcome, and the snail-paced even was heard ;
One parrot-voiced and jolly
Cried "Pretty Goblin" still for "Pretty Polly ;"
One whistled like a bird.

But sweet-tooth Laura spoke in haste :
"Good Folk, I have no coin ;
To take were to purloin ;
. . . . I have no copper in my purse,
I have no silver either,
And all my gold is on the furze
That shakes in windy weather
Above the rusty heather."
"You have much gold upon your head,"
They answered all together :
"Buy from us with a golden curl."
She clipped a precious golden lock,

She dropped a tear more rare than pearl,
Then sucked their fruit globes fair or red :
Sweeter than honey from the rock,
Stronger than man-rejoicing wine,
Clearer than water flowed that juice ;
She never tasted such before,
How should it cloy with length of use ?
She sucked and sucked and sucked the more
Fruits which that unknown orchard bore ;
She sucked until her lips were sore ;
Then flung the emptied rinds away
But gathered up one kernel stone,
And knew not was it night or day
As she turned home alone.

Lizzie met her at the gate
Full of wise upbraidings :
“Dear, you should not stay so late,
Twilight is not good for maidens ;
Should not loiter in the glen
In the haunts of goblin men.
Do you not remember Jeanie,
How she met them in the moonlight,
Took their gifts both choice and many,
Ate their fruits and wore their flowers
Plucked from bowers
Where summer ripens at all hours ?
But ever in the noonlight
She pined and pined away ;
Sought them by night and day,
Found them no more, but dwindled and grew grey
Then fell with the first snow,
While to this day no grass will grow

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Where she lies low :
I planted daisies there a year ago
That never blow.
You should not loiter so.”
“Nay, hush,” said Laura :
“Nay, hush, my sister :
I ate and ate my fill,
Yet my mouth waters still :
To-morrow night I will
Buy more ;” and kissed her :
“Have done with sorrow ;
I’ll bring you plums to-morrow
Fresh on their mother twigs,
Cherries worth getting ;
You cannot think what figs
My teeth have met in,
What melons icy-cold
Piled on a dish of gold
Too huge for me to hold,
What peaches with a velvet nap,
Pellucid grapes without one seed :
Odorous indeed must be the mead
Whereon they grow, and pure the wave they drink
With lilies at the brink,
And sugar-sweet their sap.”

Golden head by golden head,
Like two pigeons in one nest
Folded in each other’s wings,
They lay down in their curtained bed ;
Like two blossoms on one stem,
Like two flakes of new-fall’n snow,
Like two wands of ivory

Tipped with gold for awful kings.
Moon and stars gazed in at them.
Wind sang to them lullaby,
Lumbering owls forebore to fly,
Not a bat flapped to and fro
Round their rest :
Cheek to cheek and breast to breast
Locked together in one nest.

Early in the morning
When the first cock crowed his warning,
Neat little bees, as sweet and busy,
Laura rose with Lizzie :
Fetched in honey, milked the cows,
Aired and set to rights the house,
Kneaded cakes of whitest wheat,
Cakes for dainty mouths to eat,
Next churned butter, whipped up cream,
Fed their poultry, sat and sewed ;
Talked as modest maidens should :
Lizzie with an open heart,
Laura in an absent dream,
One content, one sick in part ;
One warbling for the mere bright day's delight
One longing for the night.

At length slow evening came :
They went with pitchers to the reedy brook ;
Lizzie most placid in her look,
Laura most like a leaping flame.
They drew the gurgling water from its deep ;
Lizzie plucked purple and rich golden flags,
Then turning homeward said : " The sunset flushes

Those furthest loftiest crags ;
Come, Laura, not another maiden lags.
No wilful squirrel wags,
The beasts and birds are fast asleep."
But Laura loitered still among the rushes
And said the bank was steep.

And said the hour was early still,
The dew not fall'n, the wind not chill ;
Listening ever, but not catching
The customary cry,
"Come buy, come buy,"
With its iterated jingle
Of sugar-baited words :
Not for all her watching
Once discerning even one goblin
Racing, whisking, tumbling, hobbling,
Let alone the herds
That used to tramp along the glen,
In groups or single,
Of brisk fruit-merchant men.

Till Lizzie urged, "O Laura, come ;
I hear the fruit-call, but I dare not look :
You should not loiter longer at this brook,
Come with me home.
The stars rise, the moon bends her arc,
Each glowworm winks her spark,
Let us get home before the night grows dark :
For clouds may gather
Though this is summer weather,
Put out the lights and drench us through ;
Then if we lost our way what should we do ?"

Laura turned cold as stone
To find her sister heard that cry alone,
That goblin cry,
"Come buy our fruits, come buy."
Must she then buy no more such dainty fruit ?
Must she no more such succous pasture find,
Gone deaf and blind ?
Her tree of life drooped from the root :
She said not one word in her heart's sore ache ;
But peering through the dimness, nought discerning,
Trudged home, her pitcher dripping all the way ;
So crept to bed, and lay
Silent till Lizzie slept ;
Then sat up in a passionate yearning,
And gnashed her teeth for baulked desire, and wept
As if her heart would break.

Day after day, night after night,
Laura kept watching in vain
In sullen silence of exceeding pain.
She never caught again the goblin cry :
"Come buy, come buy ;"—
She never spied the goblin men
Hawking their fruits along the glen :
But when the noon waxed bright
Her hair grew thin and grey ;
She dwindled, as the fair full moon doth turn
To swift decay and burn
Her fire away.

One day remembering her kernel-stone
She set it by a wall that faced the south ;

Dewed it with tears, hoped for a root.
Watched for a waxing shoot.
But there came none ;
It never saw the sun,
It never felt the trickling moisture run :
While with sunk eyes and faded mouth
She dreamed of melons, as a traveller sees
False waves in desert drouth
With shade of leaf-crowned trees,
And burns the thirstier in the sandful breeze.

She no more swept the house,
Tended the fowls or cows,
Fetched honey, kneaded cakes of wheat,
Brought water from the brook :
But sat down listless in the chimney-nook
And would not eat.

Tender Lizzie could not bear
To watch her sister's cankerous care
Yet not to share.
She night and morning
Caught the goblins' cry :
"Come buy our orchard fruits,
Come buy, come buy :"—
Beside the brook, along the glen.
She heard the tramp of goblin men
The voice and stir
Poor Laura could not hear ;
Longed to buy fruit to comfort her,
But feared to pay too dear.
She thought of Jeanie in her grave,
Who should have been a bride ;

But who for joys brides hope to have
Fell sick and died
In her gay prime,
In earliest Winter time,
With the first glazing rime,
With the first snow-fall of crisp Winter time

Till Laura dwindling
Seemed knocking at Death's door :
Then Lizzie weighed no more
Better and worse ;
But put a silver penny in her purse,
Kissed Laura, crossed the heath with clumps of furze
At twilight, halted by the brook :
And for the first time in her life
Began to listen and look.

Laughed every goblin
When they spied her peeping :
Came towards her hobbling,
Flying, running, leaping,
Puffing and blowing,
Chuckling, clapping, crowing,
Clucking and gobbling,
Mopping and mowing,
Full of airs and graces,
Pulling wry faces,
Demure grimaces,
Cat-like and rat-like,
Ratel- and wombat-like,
Snail-paced in a hurry,
Parrot-voiced and whistler,
Helter skelter, hurry skurry,

Chattering like magpies,
Fluttering like pigeons,
Gliding like fishes—
Hugged her and kissed her :
Squeezed and caressed her :
Stretched up their dishes,
Panniers, and plates :
“ Look at our apples
Russet and dun,
Bob at our cherries,
Bite at our peaches,
Citrons and dates,
Grapes for the asking,
Pears red with basking
Out in the sun,
Plums on their twigs ;
Pluck them and suck them,
Pomegranates, figs.”—

“ Good folk,” said Lizzie,
Mindful of Jeanie :
“ Give me much and many : ”—

Held out her apron,
Tossed them her penny.
“ Nay, take a seat with us,
Honour and eat with us,”
They answered grinning :
“ Our feast is but beginning,
Night yet is early,
Warm and dew pearly,
Wakeful and starry :
Such fruits as these

No man can carry ;
Half their bloom would fly,
Half their dew would dry,
Half their flavour would pass by
Sit down and feast with us,
Be welcome guest with us,
Cheer you and rest with us."—
"Thank you," said Lizzie : "But one waits
At home alone for me ;
So without further parleying,
If you will not sell me any
Of your fruits though much and many,
Give me back my silver penny
I tossed you for a fee."—
They began to scratch their pates,
No longer wagging, purring,
But visibly demurring,
Grunting and snarling.
One called her proud,
Cross-grained, uncivil :
Their tones waxed loud,
Their looks were evil.
Lashing their tails
They trod and hustled her,
Elbowed and jostled her,
Clawed with their nails,
Barking, mewling, hissing, mocking,
Tore her gown and soiled her stocking,
Twitched her hair out by the roots,
Stamped upon her tender feet,
Held her hands and squeezed their fruits
Against her mouth to make her eat.

White and golden Lizzie stood,
Like a lily in a flood,—
Like a rock of blue-veined stone
Lashed by tides obstreperously,—
Like a beacon left alone
In a hoary roaring sea,
Sending up a golden fire,—
Like a fruit-crowned orange-tree
White with blossoms honey-sweet
Sore beset by wasp and bee,—
Like a royal virgin town
Topped with gilded dome and spire
Close beleaguered by a fleet
Mad to tug her standard down.

One may lead a horse to water,
Twenty cannot make him drink.
Though the goblins cuffed and caught her,
Coaxed and fought her,
Bullied and besought her,
Scratched her, pinched her black as ink,
Kicked and knocked her,
Mauled and mocked her,
Lizzie uttered not a word ;
Would not open lip from lip
Lest they should cram a mouthful in ;
But laughed in heart to feel the drip
Of juice that syrupped all her face,
And lodged in dimples of her chin,
And streaked her neck which quaked like curd
At last the evil people,
Worn out by her resistance,
Flung back her penny, kicked their fruit

Along whichever road they took,
Not leaving root or stone or shoot ;
Some writhed into the ground,
Some dived into the brook
With ring and ripple,
Some scudded on the gale without a sound,
Some vanished in the distance.

In a smart, ache, tingle,
Lizzie went her way ;
Knew not was it night or day ;
Sprang up the bank, tore thro' the furze,
Threaded copse and dingle,
And heard her penny jingle
Bouncing in her purse,—
Its bounce was music to her ear.
She ran and ran
As if she feared some goblin man
Dogged her with gibe or curse
Or something worse :
But not one goblin skurried after,
Nor was she pricked by fear ;
The kind heart made her windy-paced
That urged her home quite out of breath with haste
And inward laughter.

She cried, " Laura," up the garden
" Did you miss me ?
Come and kiss me.
Never mind my bruises,
Hug me, kiss me, suck my juices
Squeezed from goblin fruits for you,
Goblin pulp and goblin dew.
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Eat me, drink me, love me ;
Laura, make much of me ;
For your sake I have braved the glen
And had to do with goblin merchant men."

Laura started from her chair,
Flung her arms up in the air,
Clutched her hair :
"Lizzie, Lizzie, have you tasted
For my sake the fruit forbidden :
Must your light like mine be hidden,
Your young life like mine be wasted,
Undone in mine undoing,
And ruined in my ruin,
Thirsty, cankered, goblin-ridden ?"—
She clung about her sister,
Kissed and kissed and kissed her :
Tears once again
Refreshed her shrunken eyes,
Dropping like rain
After long sultry drouth ;
Shaking with anguish fear, and pain,
She kissed and kissed her with a hungry mouth.

Her lips began to scorch,
That juice was wormwood to her tongue,
She loathed the feast :
Writhing as one possessed she leaped and sung,
Rent all her robe, and wrung
Her hands in lamentable haste,
And beat her breast.
Her locks streamed like the torch

Borne by a racer at full speed,
Or like the mane of horses in their flight,
Or like an eagle when she stems the light
Straight toward the sun,
Or like a cage thing freed,
Or like a flying flag when armies run.
Swift fire spread through her veins, knocked at her
heart,
Met the fire smouldering there
And overbore its lesser flame ;
She gorged on bitterness without a name :
Ah ! fool, to choose such part
Of soul-consuming care !
Sense failed in the mortal strife :
Like the watch-tower of a town
Which an earthquake shatters down,
Like a lightning-stricken mast,
Like a wind-uprooted tree
Spun about,
Like a foam-topped waterspout
Cast down headlong in the sea,
She fell at last ;
Pleasure past and anguish past,
Is it death or is it life !

Life out of death.
That night long Lizzie watched by her,
Counted her pulse's flagging stir,
Felt for her breath,
Held water to her lips, and cooled her face
With tears and fanning leaves :
But when the first birds chirped about their eaves,
And early reapers plodded to the place
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Of golden sheaves,
And dew-wet grass
Bowed in the morning winds so brisk to pass,
And new buds with new day
Opened of cup-like lilies on the stream.
Laura awoke as from a dream,
Laughed in the innocent old way,
Hugged Lizzie but not twice or thrice,
Her gleaming locks showed not one thread of grey
Her breath was sweet as May
And light danced in her eyes.

Days, weeks, months, years
Afterwards, when both were wives
With children of their own ;
Their mother-hearts beset with fears,
Their lives bound up in tender lives ;
Laura would call the little ones
And tell them of her early prime,
Those pleasant days long gone
Of not-returning time :
Would talk about the haunted glen,
The wicked, quaint fruit-merchant men,
Their fruits like honey to the throat
But poison in the blood ;
(Men sell not such in any town) :
Would tell them how her sister stood
In deadly peril to do her good,
And win the fiery antidote :
Then joining hands to little hands
Would bid them cling together,
“ For there is no friend like a sister
In calm or stormy weather ;

To cheer one on the tedious way,
To fetch one if one goes astray,
To lift one if one totters down,
To strengthen whilst one stands."

CHRISTINA ROSSETTI



THE STOLEN CHILD

WHERE dips the rocky highland
Of Sleuth Wood in the lake,

There lies a leafy island

Where flapping herons wake

The drowsy water rats ;

There we've hid our faery vats.

Full of berries,

And of reddest stolen cherries.

Come away, O human child !

To the waters and the wild

With a faery, hand in hand

For the world's more full of weeping than you can understand.

Where the wave of moonlight glosses

The dim gray sands with light

Far off by furthest Rosses

We foot it all the night,

Weaving olden dances,

Mingling hands and mingling glances

Till the moon has taken flight :

To and fro we leap

And chase the frothy bubbles,

While the world is full of troubles

And is anxious in its sleep.

Come away, O human child !

To the waters and the wild

With a faery, hand in hand,

For the world's more full of weeping than you can understand.

Where the wandering water gushes
From the hills above Glen-Car
In pools among the rushes
That scarce could bathe a star,
We seek for slumbering trout,
And whispering in their ears
Give them unquiet dreams ;
Leaning softly out
From ferns that drop their tears,
Over the young streams,
*Come away, O human child !
To the waters and the wild
With a faery, hand in hand
For the world's more full of weeping than you can understand.*

Away with us he's going,
The solemn-eyed :
He'll hear no more the lowing
Of the calves on the warm hillside ;
Or the kettle on the hob
Sing peace into his breast,
Or see the brown mice bob
Round and round the oatmeal chest.
*For he comes, the human child,
To the waters and the wild
With a faery, hand in hand,
For the world's more full of weeping than he can understand.*

W. B. YEATS

THE FAERY VOYAGER



*When the breeze of a golden dawn blew free
In the silken sail of infancy
The tide of Time flowed back with me
The forward-flowing tide of Time.*

TENNYSON

*O thou ! whose fancies from afar are brought ;
Who of thy words dost make a mock apparel,
And fittest to unutterable thought
The breeze-like motion and the self-born carol ;
Thou faery voyager ! that dost float,
In such clear water, that thy boat
May rather seem
To brood on air than on an earthly stream ;
Suspended in a stream as clear as sky
Where earth and heaven do make one imagery.*

WORDSWORTH

BY THE BABE UNBORN

IF trees were tall and grasses short
As in some crazy tale,
If here and there a sea were blue
Beyond the breaking pale.

If a fixed fire hung in the air
To warm me one day through,
If deep green hair grew on great hills,
I know what I should do.

In dark I lie ; dreaming that there
Are great eyes cold or kind,
And twisted streets and silent doors
And living men behind.

Let storm-clouds come : better an hour
And leave to weep and fight,
Than all the ages I have ruled
The empires of the night.

I think that if they gave me leave
Within that world to stand,
I would be good through all the day
I spent in fairyland.

They should not have a word from me
Of selfishness or scorn,
If only I could find the door,
If only I were born.

G. K. CHESTERTON

BACK AGAIN

IT'S back again and home again to hear the thrushes
sing,
To feel upon my face once more the breathing of the
Spring—
The fresh and gentle English breeze that stirs a wild
desire,
And makes the step as light as air, and sets the heart
afire.

It's back again and home again ! and never have I seen
The hedgerows starting into life with brighter bursts of
green ;
A dead and joyless sight they were when April had
begun,
And now they seem to sing with life beneath the kindly
sun.

“ Make haste, ye trees,” the blackbird calls, your shining
white to don ;
The cherry-tree is ready robed, her bridal dress is on ;
And out the modest blossoms peep, then flash into the
light,
And every blazing fruit-tree bears its coronal of white.

Let others praise their foreign skies and all the claims
advance
Of sun-steeped fields in Italy and vine-clad slopes in
France ;
And let them sing the land of Spain and all that makes it
fair—
One dewy patch of English lawn is worth a province
there.

One velvet patch of English lawn, and on it running free,
The little fair-haired short-frocked maid who's all the
world to me.

Her hair outshines Italian suns, and all the flowers that
grace

The meads of France can never match the roses in her
face.

So it's back again and home again ! and when the even-
ing comes

We sit and hear the clash of swords, the rolling of the
drums—

(It's all a story old as old), and, lo, the trumpets call,
And twenty thousand mail-clad men come spurring
through the hall.

And maidens to the book-shelf bound (it serves in place
of tree)

Await the young, the gallant knight who rides to set
them free ;

And giants in the corners lurk—beware ! my dear,
beware !—

And little flitting fairy shapes play sentry on the stair.

“ Good-night, God bless you, Daddy,” and so it's off to
bed,

And soon upon the pillow shines the curly little head.

Ye tricky fairies, kind and gay, wing hither swift your
flight,

Oh, keep your watch about her cot and guard her through
the night !

R. C. LEHMANN

ECKART THE TRUSTY

HOW dark it is growing—I wish we were back !
They are coming, they're here, the hobgoblins,
alack !

The band of the Sorceress Sisters !
See, see, where they come ! If they light on us here,
They'll be certain to drink every drop of the beer
It has cost us such trouble to fetch here."

So saying, the children push on in affright,
When up from the heath starts a grizzly old wight.
"Stop ! stop ! stop !—my children, be quiet !
They are thirsty and hot, for they come from the chase,
Let them drink what they like without squall or
grimace,
And the Growsome Ones they will be gracious."

And up come the goblins that moment, and they
Look ghostlike and growsome, and ghastly and grey,
Yet they revel and riot it roundly.
The beer it has vanish'd, the pitchers are bare,
Then whooping and hooting away through the air,
O'er hill and dale clatter the Weird Ones.

Off homeward, all quaking, the children they hied,
And the kindly old greybeard troops on by their side.
"Do not weep so and whimper, my darlings."
"They scold us and beat us for this." "Never fear,
All yet will go famously well with the beer,
If you'll only be mum as young mice, dears.

"Mind you follow my bidding, and surely you may,
I am he who delights with small children to play :

You know me—Old Eckart the Trusty,
Of that wonderful wight you've heard many a lay,
But never had proof what he is till to-day :
Now you hold in your hands a most rare one."

Arrived at their home, each small child, with a face
Of terror, his pitcher set down in its place,
And waits to be beaten and scolded.
When the old folks they sip: "Oh, what excellent
beer!"
Three, four times they take a strong pull at the cheer,
Yet still do the pitchers brim over.

The miracle lasted that night and next day ;
And if you should ask, as you very well may,
What became in the end of the pitchers ?
The little mice titter, enjoying the joke,
But at length, sirs, they stammer'd and stutter'd and
spoke,
And the pitchers immediately dried up !

And children, if e'er, looking kindly and true,
An old man, or father, or master teach you,
Give heed, and do all that he bids you.
Though to bridle your tongues it may cost you some
pain,
Yet to chatter is bad, to be silent is gain,
And it makes the beer brim in the pitchers !

SIR THEODORE MARTIN

THE BUGLES OF DREAMLAND

SWIFTLY the dews of the gloaming are falling :
Faintly the bugles of Dreamland are calling.

O hearken, my darling, the elf-flutes are blowing
The shining-eyed folk from the hillside are flowing,
I' the moonshine the wild-apple blossoms are snowing
And louder and louder where the white dews are
falling

The far-away bugles of Dreamland are calling.

O what are the bugles of Dreamland calling

There where the dews of the gloaming are falling ?

Come away from the weary old world of tears,

Come away, come away to where one never hears

The slow weary drip of the slow weary years,

But peace and deep rest where the white dews are
falling

And the blithe bugle-laughters through Dreamland are
calling.

Then bugle for us ; where the cool dews are falling,

O bugle for us, wild elf-flutes now calling—

For Isla and I are too weary to wait

For the dim drowsy whisper that cometh too late,

The dim muffled whisper of blind empty fate—

O the world's well lost now the dream-dews are
falling,

And the bugles of Dreamland about us are calling.

FIONA MACLEOD

SONG (FOR MUSIC)

A LAKE and a fairy boat
To sail in the moonlight clear—
And merrily we would float
From the dragons that watch us here !

Thy gown should be snow-white silk,
And strings of orient pearls
Like gossamers dipped in milk
Should twine with thy raven curls !

Red rubies should deck thy hands,
And diamonds should be thy dower—
But Fairies have broke their wands
And wishing has lost its power !

TOM HOOD

THE DREAM-FAIR

BEING an account of how three children, after becoming by enchantment much smaller than Tom Thumb, and having extraordinary adventures with various monsters in the Forest of Wild Thyme (where the children were seeking their little brother Peterkin, whom mere "grown-ups" were sorrowfully wont to say they had lost and would never see again), came to the Faëry City of Sleep, under the guidance of two fairies—Pease-Blossom and Mustard-Seed,—and to their surprise found a strange Fair proceeding, which ended in a very mysterious and wonderful way.

FAINT and sweet as a lily's repose
On the broad black breast of a midnight lake,
The City delighted the cradling night :
Like a straggling palace of cloud it rose ;
The towers were crowned with a crystal light
Like the starry crown of a white snow-flake
As they pierced in a wild white pinnacled crowd,
Through the dusky wreaths of enchanted cloud
That swirled all round like a witch's hair.

And we heard, as the sound of a great sea sighing,
The sigh of the sleepless world of care ;
And we saw strange shadowy figures flying
Up to the Ivory Gates and beating
With pale hands, long and famished and thin ;
Like blinded birds we saw them dash
Against the cruelly gleaming wall :
We heard them wearily moan and call
With sharp starved lips for ever entreating
The pale door-keeper to let them in.

And still, as they beat, again and again,
We saw on the moon-pale lintels a splash
Of crimson blood, like a poppy-stain,
Or a wild red rose from the gardens of pain
That sigh all night like a ghostly sea
From the City of Sleep to Gethsemane.

And lo, as we neared that mighty crowd
An old blind man came, crying aloud
To greet us, as once the blind man cried
In the Bible picture—you know we tried
To paint that print, with its Eastern sun ;
But the reds and the yellows *would* mix and run,
And the blue of the sky made a horrible mess
Right over the edge of the Lord's white dress.

And the old blind man, just as though he had eyes,
Came straight to meet us ; and all the cries
Of the crowd were hushed ; and a strange sweet calm
Stole through the air like a breath of the balm
That was wafted abroad from the Forest of Thyme
(For it rolled all round that curious clime
With its magical clouds of perfumed trees).
And the blind man cried, "Our help is at hand !
Oh, brothers, remember the old command,
Remember the frankincense and myrrh,—
Make way, make way for those little ones there ;
Make way, make way, I have seen them afar
Under a great white Eastern star ;
For I am the mad blind man who sees !"
Then he whispered, softly—*Of such as these* ;
And through the bush of the cloven crowd
We passed to the Gates of the City, and there

Our fairy heralds cried aloud—
Open your Gates ; don't stand and stare ;
These are the Children for whom our King
Made all the star-worlds dance in a ring !

And lo, like a sorrow that melts from the heart
In tears, the slow gates melted apart,
And into the City we passed like a dream ;
And then, in one splendid marching stream
The whole of that host came following through.

We were only children, just like you ;
Children, ah, but we felt so grand
As we led them—although we could understand
Nothing at all of the wonderful song
That rose all round as we marched along.

SONG

You that have seen how the world and its glory
Change and grow old like the love of a friend ;
You that have come to the end of the story,
You that were tired ere you came to the end ;
You that are weary of laughter and sorrow,
Pain and pleasure, labour and sin,
Sick of the midnight and dreading the morrow,
Ah, come in ; come in.

You that are bearing the load of the ages ;
You that have loved overmuch and too late ;
You that confute all the saws of the sages ;
You that served only because you must wait,

*Knowing your work was a wasted endeavour ;
You that have lost and yet triumphed therein,
Add loss to your losses and triumph for ever ;
Ah, come in ; come in.*

And we knew as we went up that twisted street,
With its violet shadows and pearl-pale walls,
We were coming to Something strange and sweet,
For the dim air echoed with elfin calls ;
And, far away, in the heart of the City,
A murmur of laughter and revelry rose,—
A sound that was faint as the smile of Pity,
And sweet as a swan-song's golden close.

And then, once more, as we marched along,
There surged all round us that wonderful song,
And it swung to the tramp of our marching feet ;
But ah, it was tenderer now and so sweet
That it made our eyes grow wet and blind,
And the whole wide world seem mother-kind,
Folding us round with a gentle embrace,
And pressing our souls to her soft sweet face.

SONG

*Dreams ; dreams ; ah, the memory blinding us,
Blinding our eyes to the way that we go ;
Till the new sorrow come, once more reminding us
Blindly of kind hearts, ours long ago :
Mother-mine, whisper we, yours was the love for me !
Still, though our paths lie lone and apart,
Yours is the true love, shining above for me,
Yours are the kind eyes, hurting my heart.*

*Dreams ; dreams ; ah, how shall we sing of them,
Dreams that we love with our head on her breast ;
Dreams ; dreams ; and the cradle-sweet swing of them ;
Ay ; for her voice was the sound we loved best.
Can we remember at all or, forgetting it,
Can we recall for a moment the gleam
Of our childhood's delight and the wonder begetting it,
Wonder awakened in dreams of a dream ?*

And, once again, from the heart of the City
A murmur of tenderer laughter rose,
A sound that was faint as the smile of Pity
And sweet as a swan-song's golden close :
And it seemed as if some wonderful Fair
Were charming the night of the City of Dreams,
For, over the mystical din out there,
The clouds were litten with flickering gleams,
And a roseate light like the day's first flush
Quivered and beat on the towers above,
And we heard through the curious crooning hush
An elfin song that we used to love.

Little Boy Blue, come blow up your horn . . .
And the soft wind blew it the other way ;
And all that we heard was—*Cow's in the corn ;*
But we never hear anything half so gay !
And ever we seemed to be drawing nearer
That mystical roseate smoke-wreathed glare,
And the curious music grew louder and clearer,
Till Mustard-Seed said, " We are lucky, you see,
We've arrived at a time of festivity ! "
And so to the end of the street we came
And turned a corner and—there we were,

In a place that glowed like the dawn of day,
A crowded clamouring City square
Like the cloudy heart of an opal, aflame
With the lights of a great Dream-Fair :
Thousands of children were gathered there,
Thousands of old men, weary and grey,
And the shouts of the showmen filled the air—
This way ! This way ! This way !

And *See-Saw* ; *Margery Daw* ; we heard a rollicking
shout
As the swing-boats hurtled over our heads to the tune of
the roundabout ;
And *Little Boy Blue*, *come blow up your horn*, we heard the
showmen cry,
And *Dickory Dock*, *I'm as good as a clock*, we heard the
swings reply.

This way, this way to your Heart's Desire,
Come, cast your burdens down ;
And the pauper shall mount his throne in the skies,
And the king be rid of his crown :
And souls that were dead shall be fed with fire
From the fount of their ancient pain,
And your lost love come with the light in her eyes
Back to your heart again.

Ah ; here be sure she shall never prove
Less kind than her eyes were bright ;
This way, this way to your old lost love
You shall kiss her lips to-night ;

This way for the smile of a dead man's face
And the grip of a brother's hand ;
This way to your childhood's heart of grace
And your home in Fairyland.

Dickory Dock, I'm as good as a clock, d'you hear my swivels
chime ?

To and fro as I come and go, I keep eternal time.
O, little Bo-peep, if you've lost your sheep and don't
know where to find 'em,
Leave 'em alone and they'll come home, and carry their
tails behind 'em.

And *See-Saw ; Margery Daw* ; there came the chorussing
shout

As the swing-boats answered the roaring tune of the
rollicking roundabout ;

Dickory, dickory, dickory, dock, d'you hear my swivels
chime ?

Swing ; swing ; you're as good as a king if you keep
eternal time.

Then we saw that the tunes of the world were one ;
And the metre that guided the rhythmic sun,
Was at one, like the ebb and the flow of the sea,
With the tunes that we learned at our mother's knee ;
The beat of the horse-hoofs that carried us down
To see the fine Lady of Banbury Town ;
And so, by the rhymes that we knew, we could tell
Without knowing the others—that all was well.

And then our brains began to spin ;
For it seemed as if that mighty din

Were no less than the cries of the poets and sages
Of all the nations in all the ages ;
And, if they could only beat out the whole
Of their music together, the guerdon and goal
Of the world would be reached with one mighty shout,
And the dark dread secret of Time be out ;
And nearer, nearer they seemed to climb,
And madder and merrier rose the song,
And the swings and the see-saws marked the time ;
For this was the maddest and merriest throng
That ever was met on a holy-day
To dance the dust of the world away ;
And madder and merrier, round and round
The whirligigs whirled to the whirling sound,
Till it seemed that the mad song burst its bars
And mixed with the song of the whirling stars,
The song that the rhythmic Time-Tides tell
To seraphs in Heaven and devils in Hell :
Ay ; Heaven and Hell in accordant chime
With the universal rhythm and rhyme
Were nearing the secret of Space and Time ;
The song of that ultimate mystery
Which only the mad blind men who see,
Led by the laugh of a little child,
Can utter ; Ay, wilder and yet more wild
It maddened, till now—full song—it was out !
It roared from the starry roundabout,—

*A child was born in Bethlehem, in Bethlehem, in Bethlehem,
A child was born in Bethlehem ; ah, hear my fairy fable ;
For I have seen the King of kings, no longer thronged with
angel wings,
But croodling like a little babe, and cradled in a stable.*

*The wise men came to greet him with their gifts of myrrh
and frankincense,
Gold and myrrh and frankincense they brought to make him
mirth ;
And would you know the way to win to little brother
Peterkin,
My childhood's heart shall guide you through the glories of
the earth.*

*A child was born in Bethlehem, in Bethlehem, in Bethlehem ;
The wise men came to welcome him : a star stood o'er the
gable ;
And there they saw the King of kings, no longer thronged
with angel wings,
But croodling like a little babe, and cradled in a stable.*

ALFRED NOYES

(From "The Forest of Wild Thyme")

THE PRINCE OF FAIRIES

HE came all so still
Where His mother was
As dew in Aprill
That falleth on the grass.

He came all so still
Where His mother lay,
As dew in Aprill
That falleth on the spray.

He came all so still
To His mother's bower
As dew in Aprill
That falleth on the flower.

Mother and maiden,
Was never none but she !
Well might such a lady
God's mother be !

ANONYMOUS

LAST ECHOES

*Farewell, rewards and fairies,
Good housewives now may say,
For now foul sluts in dairies
Do fare as well as they.*



THE HORNS OF ELFLAND

THE splendour falls on castle walls
And snowy summits old in story :
The long light shakes across the lakes
And the wild cataract leaps in glory.
Blow, bugle, blow, set the wild echoes flying,
Blow, bugle ; answer, echoes, dying, dying, dying.

O hark, O hear ! how thin and clear
And thinner, clearer, farther going,
O sweet and far from cliff and seas
The horns of Elfland faintly blowing !
Blow, let us hear the purple glens replying :
Blow, bugle ; answer, echoes, dying, dying, dying.

O love, they die in yon rich sky
They faint on hill or field or river :
Our echoes roll from soul to soul
And grow for ever and for ever.
Blow, bugle, blow, set the wild echoes flying,
And answer, echoes, answer, dying, dying, dying.

ALFRED, LORD TENNYSON

EPILOGUE

Enter Puck

PUCK. Now the hungry lion roars
And the wolf behowls the moon ;
Whilst the heavy ploughman snores,
All with weary task fordone.
Now the wasted brands do glow,
Whilst the screech-owl, screeching loud,
Puts the wretch that lies in woe
In remembrance of a shroud
Now it is the time of night
That the graves all gaping wide,
Every one lets forth his sprite,
In the church-way paths to glide :
And we fairies, that do run
By the triple Hecate's team,
From the presence of the sun,
Following darkness like a dream,
Now are frolic : not a mouse
Shall disturb this hallow'd house :
I am sent with broom before,
To sweep the dust behind the door.

Enter OBERON and TITANIA with their train.

Obe. Through the house give glimmering light,
By the dead and drowsy fire :
Every elf and fairy sprite
Hop as light as bird from brier ;
And this ditty, after me,
Sing, and dance it trippingly.

Tita. First, rehearse your song by rote,
To each word a warbling note :
Hand in hand, with fairy grace,
Will we sing, and bless this place.

Exeunt OBERON, TITANIA, and train.

SHAKESPEARE



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